

PS3  
PlayStation 3PSP  
PlayStation Portable

PlayStation 2



PlayStation Network

# PlayStation®

## Official Magazine - Australia

MAY ISSUE 2010  
100% Australian Content

EXCLUSIVE HANDS-ON!

# UFC

2010

EVERYTHING you need  
to know about the fighter  
that breaks ALL the rules!

OVER 30 GAMES INSIDE!

- Formula 1 2010 • Naughty Bear
- L.A. Noire • Mafia II • Skate 3
- Ghost Recon Future Soldier
- International Cricket 2010



TESTED!

## RED DEAD REDEMPTION

Multiplayer you can't miss!

TOP 10

VIDEO GAME SIDEKICKS WHO  
DESERVE THEIR OWN GAMES!

HIGH TECH!

## BACKBREAKER

Why it's the future of sports games!

REVIEWED!

## SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

Packing a punch or limp-wristed?



VERDICT!

## JUST CAUSE 2

Spy hard with a vengeance!



REVEALED!

## TEST DRIVE 2 UNLIMITED 2

The radical racer without borders

ISSUE 43 MAY 2010  
AUS \$14.95 NZ \$16.95 inc GST

9 771834 380002

PRINT POST APPROVED PP255003/06871

05

FIFA WORLD CUP 2010 FIRST LOOK • ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR GOD OF WAR III





PS3  
PlayStation 3



PlayStation Network



**“one of this generation’s definitive titles”**

**9.5/10 – IGN**

**9/10 – Gamespot**

# **grand theft auto**

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## BACKBREAKER

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**“We set out to destroy the 2009 product and I feel that we did”**

NEVEN DRAVINSKI, PRODUCER

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# UFC 2010

It's raw, it's brutal, and it looks spectacular

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The next-gen sequel set to shake up the racing game scene!

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We find out what makes this sports game so stunning!

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Hands on multiplayer action with this Wild Western!

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The benchmark for action games just went up – way up!

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New characters, new moves, and much much more!

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...you must do in *Battlefield: Bad Company 2*, including destruction, wit and Clint Eastwood

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Just when you thought you knew action games. The mad Spaniard returns to blow them all apart!



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Two great reasons why you need to go back to Liberty City.



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Worthwhile update or reason to get angry at the ridiculous end-boss again?



### 77 STAR OCEAN: THE LAST HOPE

We leap into this RPG and find out if it's a fantastic voyage or lost cause.



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Can this set a fast lap or does it stall on the grid? Turn over and find out!



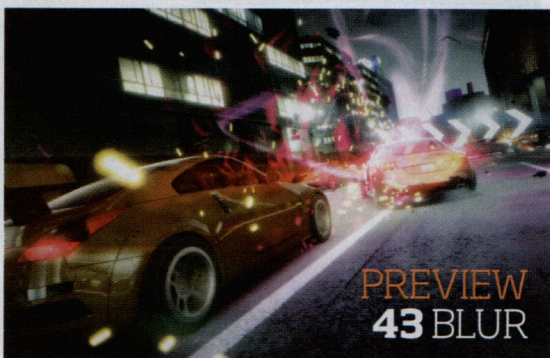
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Destined for superstardom or perfect practice for pumping out golden oldies at the RSL?

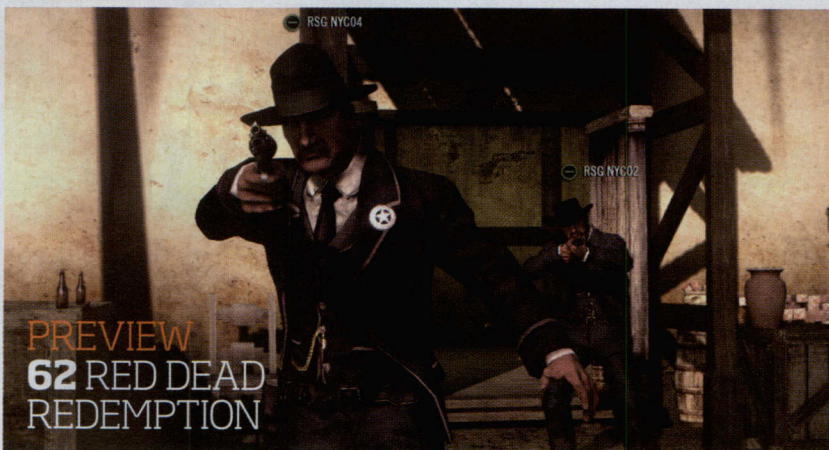


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This grizzly isn't here for a picnic - but he does pack a surprise!

**NAUGHTY BEAR**

45

## 32 WIN!

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RESONANCE OF  
FATE**

**10x COPIES OF  
YAKUZA 3**



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M

Mild Coarse  
Language.  
Mild Violence

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# PlayStation®

Official Magazine - Australia

## EDITORIAL & DESIGN

### EDITOR

Luke Reilly

### DEPUTY EDITOR

Paul Taylor

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Adam Mathew

### CONTRIBUTORS

James Ellis, James Cottee, Anthony O'Connor, Dylan Burns, Amy Flower, David Kozicki, Andy Astruc

### ART DIRECTOR

Stephanie Goh

### CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Paul Cook

## PUBLISHING & CIRCULATION

### CIRCULATION ENQUIRIES

(02) 8305 6900

### PRODUCTION MANAGER

Graham Hood

## ADVERTISING & MARKETING

### NATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGER

Nikki Turnbull

(02) 8305 6904

## HOW TO CONTACT US

TEL (02) 8305 6900

FAX (02) 8305 6999

Official PlayStation Magazine

P.O. Box 1643

Bondi Junction NSW 1355

### WANT TO SUBSCRIBE?

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Fax (02) 9267 4363

www.magshop.com.au

## MANAGEMENT

### DIRECTOR

Jim Flynn

### FINANCE DIRECTOR

Sandy Barnes

### MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT

Stuart Harle

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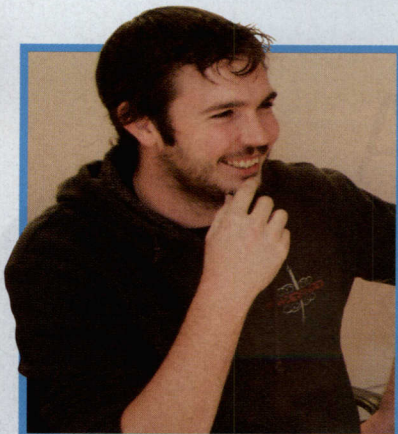
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**SHOUT OUTS:** KJR :: Vinnie :: Nicole :: Luke Mathew :: Lucy :: MJ :: AC/DC :: Vispi Bhohti is figure skating :: E :: Squeegee :: Ballzac :: The ghost of Scotch and Clips



**LUKE REILLY**  
EDITOR

### PSN:

Capt\_Flashheart



**PLAYING:**  
JUST CAUSE 2



**WANTING:**  
GRAN TURISMO 5

# WELCOME!

It's old news by now, but yes, it's true. The, let's say, *widely disliked* Michael Atkinson has stepped down from his position as South Australian Attorney-General. Perhaps he wasn't lying when he said he's become more afraid of gamers than outlaw motorcycle gangs. Perhaps he was still smarting over the bollocking he got from the public after it was reported he had lawyers demand \$20,000 in compensation from some random bloke who called him a 'crook' on the *Adelaide Now* website. Frankly I don't care. The fact that Atkinson has finally quit is still a victory for commonsense.

It's just been announced that former backbencher John Rau will replace Michael Atkinson as Attorney-General of the state.

Gamers4Croydon president Chris Prior seems happy with the appointment, tweeting "New SA Attorney-General is John Rau, a supporter of the R18+ classification for games (and a nice guy, to boot)".

We'll just have to take his word for it.

But what's next?

The closing date for public submissions on the introduction of an R18+ rating has long-passed. All reports indicate overwhelming support for an update of the classification system to ensure adult games are rated accordingly. The next meeting of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General will be held in Melbourne on April 29. At the time of going to print it's unknown whether an R18+ rating will be discussed but, assuming they are committed to supporting the will of people rather than their own agendas, things are looking up.

*Whe Pish*

## OPS ON: WHAT WE'VE QUIT



**STEPHANIE GOH**  
ART DIRECTOR

Using a PC and, with it, *World of Warcraft*. Then 20 seconds later I got it on my Mac and things went back to normal. Horde FTW!

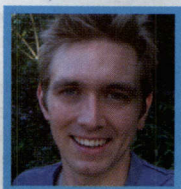
**PSN:** TBA

**PLAYING:**

Dragon Age: Origins

**WANTING:**

Red Dead Redemption



**PAUL TAYLOR**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

Recently, shaving between deadlines. Patchy facial hair is a social movement, gents; show your commitment to a cause by doing absolutely nothing.

**PSN:** paulgusta

**PLAYING:**

Just Cause 2

**WANTING:**

Backbreaker



**ADAM MATHEW**  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Compulsive lying. It was difficult but, after 13 years of secret ninja training from an Eskimo grandmaster, I managed to do it.

**PSN:** YourmumsAWESOME

**PLAYING:**

BioShock 2

**WANTING:**

L.A. Noire



**JAMES COTTEE**  
CONTRIBUTOR

I have given up hoping that Tim Burton will ever make another good movie; even Alan Rickman couldn't save his latest shocker.

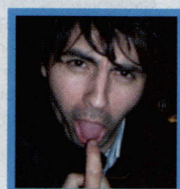
**PSN:** DrWho3987

**PLAYING:**

Borderlands

**WANTING:**

Monster Hunter Freedom 3



**JAMES ELLIS**  
CONTRIBUTOR

Many many things: I am a quitter. The only thing I haven't quit is quitting, and being absolutely unstoppable at *Street Fighter IV*.

**PSN:** gtfaster49

**PLAYING:**

Super Street Fighter IV

**WANTING:**

Red Dead Redemption





## MOTION CONTROLS

# GETTING A MOVE ON

## New motion controller debuts

At the Game Developers Conference (GDC) in San Francisco, Sony announced it would be releasing a motion-sensitive controller, the PlayStation Move, in Spring this year. Utilising the main controller that has a colour-changing globe on the top, the sub-controller and the PlayStation Eye camera, Move plans to offer "an innovative and highly immersive experience" according to Sony. It's also very different to anything else that's available and going to be available in the near future.

The Move is promoting accuracy and true representation of your actions as the hardware inside includes a three-axis gyroscope, a three-axis accelerometer, and a terrestrial magnetic field sensor. Plus, the PlayStation Eye camera refines your position and movement by tracking the sphere on top of the main controller. Plus, it rumbles.

As well as the motion sensitivity, which in the SIXAXIS was little more than a gimmick in many games, the Move controller has the familiar PlayStation face buttons and a trigger underneath, whilst the sub-controller implements a thumbstick, d-pad and **△** and **○** buttons with **×** and **□**. Like your DualShock, the Move controllers are both rechargeable through your PS3's USB ports. It's also possible to use a SIXAXIS or DualShock controller in place of the sub-controller.

As there's no wire between the two controllers we expect to see the range of actions you'll perform be fairly broad. Sony also showed off a few games at GDC, but we'd really be surprised if any of these initial games were sold as full-price games – we expect them to be released either with the controller or as downloadable games through the PSN Store.

## THE GAMES INCLUDED:



### MOTION FIGHTER

A boxing game using two main controllers and a combination of button presses to land punches.



### MOVE PARTY

This collection of mini-games will put you in the action, and the Move controller will become things, like a giant fly swatter. Aimed at families this looks like a refined version of the PS2's EyeToy games.



### SLIDER

Outrageous downhill racing on an office chair. Use the controller to push yourself forward then twist it to turn, flick it to jump and press the main 'Move' button to lean back so you can go underneath things.



### SPORTS CHAMPIONS

A collection of sports games, including table tennis, archery, beach volleyball, and flying-disc golf. Destined to show off the precision of Move.



### THE SHOOT

A casual shooter, the main controller becomes a gun and you have to take down your enemies.



### TV SUPERSTARS

Another mini-game collection implementing the Eye to put you in a fake TV shows and commercials, while you're dressed up in the game's on-screen outfits.



The Move controllers, shown approximately actual size. As you can see, they contain most of the buttons you'll already be quite familiar with after more than a decade of DualShocks. We look forward to getting a few pairs of these new babies into the office and busting loose.

Sony plans on releasing more than 20 games in the 2010 fiscal year, and 36 third-party publishers and developers will make games for the Move. The biggest we know about is Sony's own *SOCOM 4*, and shooters are one of the most logical genres to be given motion sensitive controls. *Brunswick Pro Bowling* has also been announced, which could be a sleeper hit with *The Big Lebowski* fans.







**16 IN FOCUS**  
We check out some more Gran Turismo 5 shots. Again.



**22 AROUND THE WORLD IN PS3**  
We head abroad for all that's odd.



**30 ANGRY SACKBOY**  
He's still angry, and it's consuming him at a rapid rate!



HELLISH

## GOD OF WAR COLLECTION TO BE RELEASED IN AUS

Finally, Sony's own Kratos returns to PS3 in the *God of War Collection*, which features the first two games in the series on one Blu-ray Disc, remastered to run at 60 frames per second and in 1080p. Plus, it also features Trophy support. We're having slight spasms right now.

Out in the US since November last year, demand

in Australia and Europe has resulted in a local release. While the content remains the same, the graphical scrub and polish applied to two of the best PlayStation action games should be enough to tempt veterans back, whilst newcomers should also consider checking this out.

Hitting stores on April 29, Collection retails for \$59.95 and we'll have a full review next issue.

## WHAT'S HOT OR NOT

Too hot to handle? Or too cold to hold?



**Just Cause 2**

The reason we all turn up to work tired now...



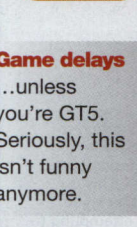
**Euphoria**

The tech that keeps on giving. Always impressive.



**Game delays**

We guess they pace out the awesome releases...



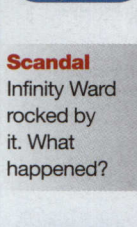
**Game delays**

...unless you're GT5. Seriously, this isn't funny anymore.



**GT Academy**

Aussie knocked out of the tourney. Top effort anyway.



**Scandal**

Infinity Ward rocked by it. What happened?



**Blanka**

Stop being electric. We're trying to win.

GRINNERS

## BIGGEST PRIZE EVER AWARDED

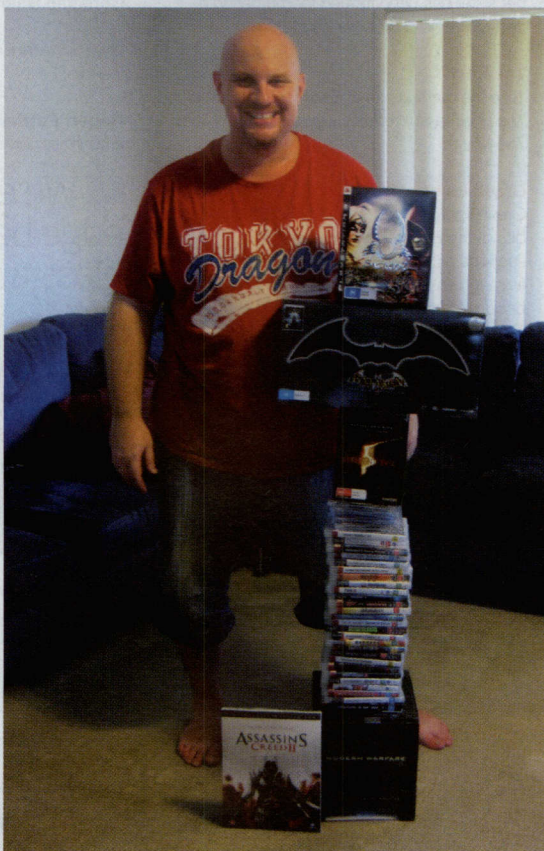
Back in our Christmas issue we ran a competition to give away our biggest prize ever: 40 games to one deserving reader. The criteria was to tell us what good deed you had done this year and why you thought you deserved the swag of games.

It wasn't only the biggest comp in terms of prize, but also the biggest response we've had. Ever. Hundreds of entries came in, all of them read, studied and pondered until we finally made our choice after some difficult decisions. There were many of you with tales that made us appreciate how generous, talented, thoughtful and passionate our readers are.

The winner? Mark Blackman, whose wife, Julie, entered on his behalf. After a member of Julie's family was taken seriously ill, Mark stepped up and took on work, their two kids, keeping the house in order whilst juggling his studies at uni, so Julie could help her family over many months. That's a monumental effort.

Mark, however, didn't know that he'd been entered into the comp and was speechless when told the news. When he could speak, it was a "very, very pleasant surprise. Totally awesome!"

We'd like to congratulate Mark again and wish the family the best. We'd also like to thank all everyone who entered. The games are already stacking up for this year's competition...



## IN SHORT...

3D TV is coming, and while everyone will need to buy a new screen to use it, your PS3 is the only Blu-ray player to be immediately ready to play movies in 3D. Awesome. Looks like you choose wisely.



The chance of seeing an R18+ sticker on games just got one step closer, as the SA Attorney-General Michael Atkinson stepped down after the SA elections. No word on who the new AG will be.



*Batman: Arkham Asylum* took out the coveted BAFTA for Best Game, as well as Best Action Game, of 2009 in the UK, while *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves* nabbed Best Story amongst others. Nice!





## FACEPALM!

Status updates from the digital elite



**Kratos** wants to murder your face off.

Today 3:46pm • Comment • Like



**Dr. Phil** Kratos, I'm here because I think you have some unhealthy emotional issues that may be fueling this hurtful cycle of hate and anti-social behaviour. Let's start with your father, what can you tell us about him?

14 hours ago • Report



**Zeus** I was a model parent, Dr. Phil. I was always around to give my son helpful pointers on life.

11 hours ago • Report



**Kratos** Bull #%^\$ing S^&\$! The only time you took me aside to make a point about life was when you stabbed me to "death".

10 hours ago • Report



**Dr. Phil** Now, now, Kratos. That language is very counter-productive to this discussion.

9 hours ago • Report



**Zeus** I apologise on his behalf, Dr. Phil. I wonder now as I wondered then if he might have turned out a better son if I'd administered a few more fatal beatings earlier on in his life.

9 hours ago • Report



**Dr. Phil** ...er, yes.

8 hours ago • Report



**Dr. Phil** Anyhoo, I'm starting to see a distinctive pattern forming here. You're both suffering from "Skywalker Syndrome". This is where a son and a father try to express their love by attempting to kill one another. Also, as a side-effect, Kratos, you may get the hots for your sister.

7 hours ago • Report



**Kratos** I'm currently tapping more ass than Tiger Woods. The big dog's well fed, no inbreeding here.

3 hours ago • Report



**Dr. Phil** Okay, but we still need to lower your rage. Yoga, perhaps?

3 hours ago • Report



**Kratos** How about this instead; I force-feed you your own lungs.

3 hours ago • Report



**Raging Raven** That's it Kratos. Show them your raage! Your raaaaaaagaaaaaage!

3 hours ago • Report



**Kratos** STFU, or you're the next to dine on blade.

2 hours ago • Report



**Raging Raven** Sorry, sir. I'll be good.

2 hours ago • Report



**Kratos** Spoiler: you're going to be next ANYWAY.

1 hour ago • Report

## SCREENTEST

Your favourite games as movies

### MIRROR'S EDGE

Born to run

**The Director**  
Paul Greengrass

**The Plot...**

...is a combination of something dreamed up by the Wachowski brothers and George Orwell. In an unknown city, the government has quashed crime and civil unrest as they impose strict surveillance upon its population. All forms of electronic communication are monitored, and the only way for truly private info to be shared is by the Runners, a group who takes packages and leap across the rooftops of skyscrapers. Which is illegal. One Runner, Faith, has just discovered her sister has been framed for murdering a politician who promises change.

**The Pitch**

Take the running bits of *Enemy of The State* and *The Bourne Supremacy*, lashed together with *The Matrix*.

**Green Light or Development Hell?**

Green light, without a doubt. Some of the best bits of the Bourne movies were the running sections as Bourne spider-monkeyed his way from a train station to a boat and back to a bridge, or from another building to another without hitting the pavement. Hell, keep the

shaky cam and replace the gritty environments with a super-clean city. Step three: profit.

**Best Line:**

**Faith:** "We call ourselves runners. We exist on the edge between the gloss and the reality. The mirror's edge."

**The Cast:**

**Shannyn Sossamon** as the glue-for-feet Faith

**Shannyn Sossamon** as Faith's twin sister, Kate Connors, who is framed for murder

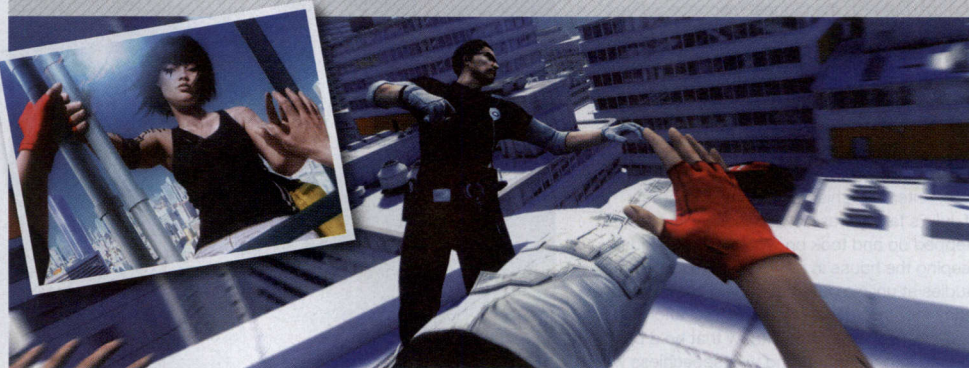
**Christian Bale** as Mercury, Faith's boss.

**Gwen Stefani** as Celeste, another Runner and friend of Faith

**Robert Patrick** as Cop #3 who is embarrassingly disarmed and then knocked out.

**"We exist on the edge between the gloss and the reality"**

FAITH

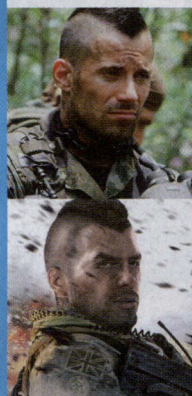


## NUMBER CRUNCHING

# 55,000

Number of submissions from the Australian public to the federal government in response whether an R18+ rating should be given to videogames.

## SEPARATED AT BIRTH!



**NO. 15** Johnny Messner and dependable Scot "Soap" MacTavish

Would you look at that? He has the Mohawk, the stubble and the hard eyes, PLUS he's in army fatigues. The preceding sentence can easily be applied to *Tears of The Sun* Johnny Messner or 'get this knife out of my chest' MacTavish. Just give Messner some thicker eyebrows and a grizzled English Captain, and he'll be set for the *Modern Warfare 2* movie set. (Thanks to Tom Atkinson for saving us time and money.)

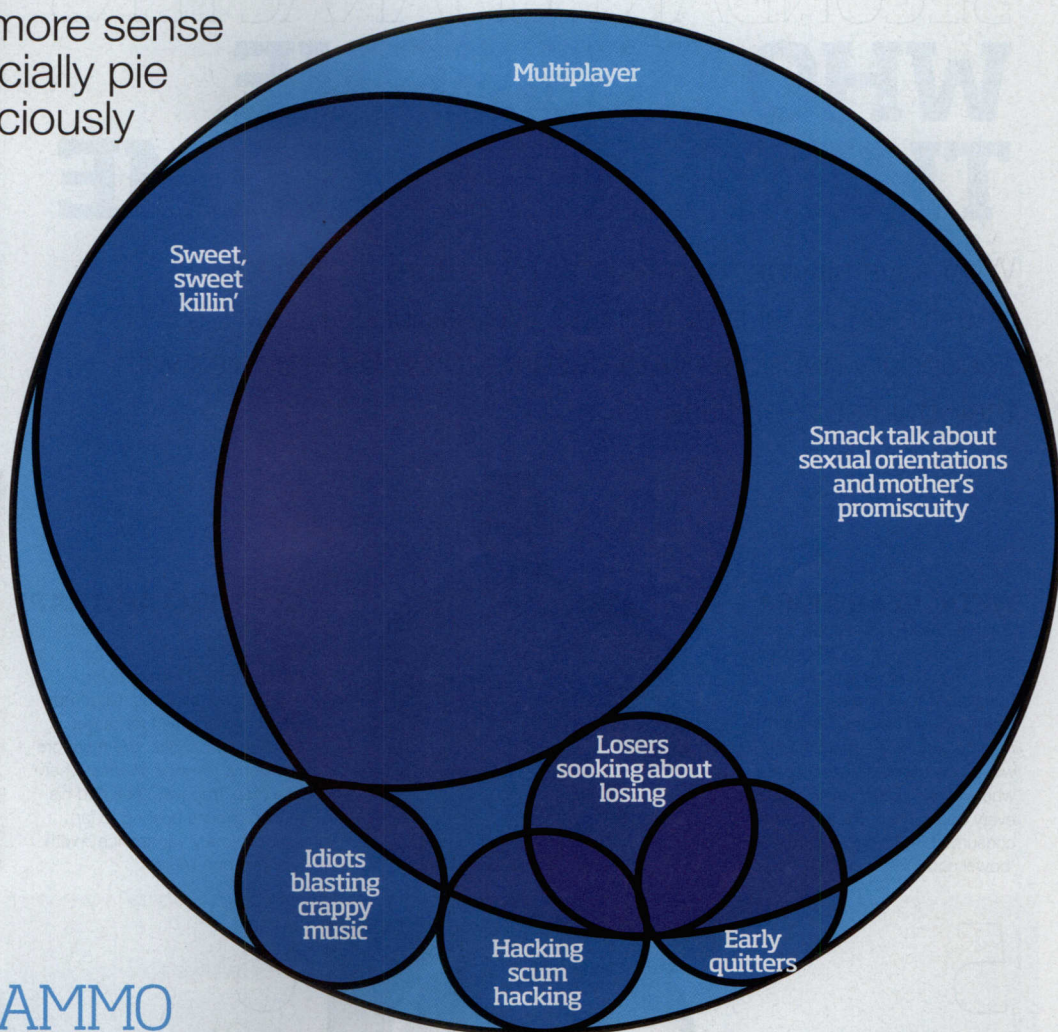


# THE OPS CHARTS

Everything makes more sense in chart form. Especially pie charts. They're deliciously informative!

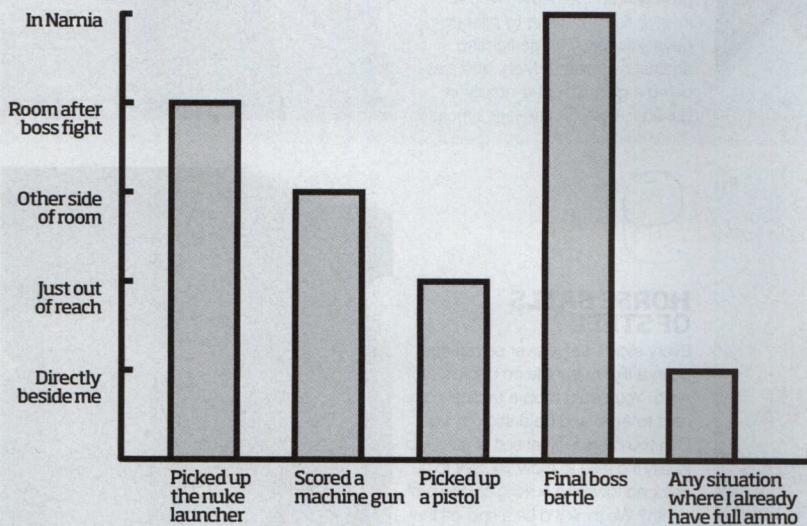
## WHAT REALLY HAPPENS DURING AN ONLINE MULTIPLAYER MATCH?

Multiplayer. There's a reason why not everyone chooses to engage in it, and a ropey Internet connection isn't always it. See right.



## PROXIMITY OF AMMO BOX BY SITUATION

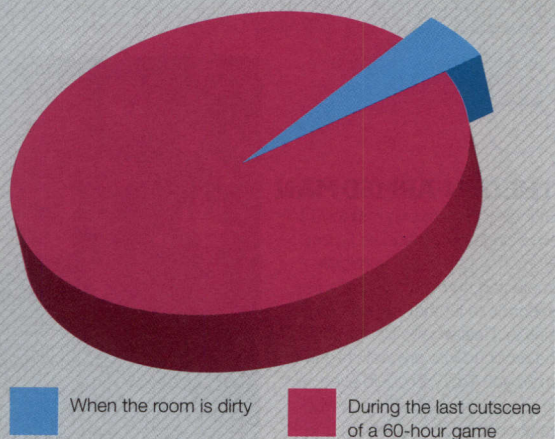
Ammo. It's an essential staple of the videogaming world. Unfortunately, it's rarely ever distributed in a fair and decent fashion. Here's a breakdown.



SITUATIONS REQUIRING AMMO BOX

## WHEN YOUR ROOMMATE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER DECIDES TO VACUUM

We're all been there. You're sitting in front of the TV, you're trying to pay attention – and you can't hear a thing.





## TOP 10

# SECONDARY CHARACTERS WHO DESERVE THEIR OWN GAME

Who says all videogames should feature a clichéd one-dimensional protagonist? We've hunted down 10 secondary nobodies who deserve to be somebodies with their own spin-off titles

### 2

#### METAL GEAR AKIBA

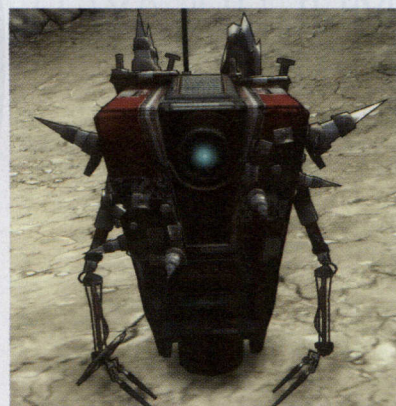
Johnny Sasaki, nicknamed Akiba by his comrades in *MGS4* suffers from irritable bowel syndrome. Long story short; his explosive diarrhoea can be measured in megatons. Imagine then, if you will, a new breed of action game where every firefight, every skydive, every dodgy roast chicken pickup consumed realistically affects your 'bowel control' meter. Full of win.



### 3

#### GET THE CLAP (TRAP)

Cowering at the opposite end of the 'robot cojones' scale is the CL4P-TP. Despite being categorically hilarious, Claptraps are frequently used for target practice by bandits. We therefore envision a revenge shooter where one Clap Trap (who has had his reason circuits pushed to far) exacts bloody vengeance – with hilarious one-liners.



### 5

#### METHANE ON THE BRAIN

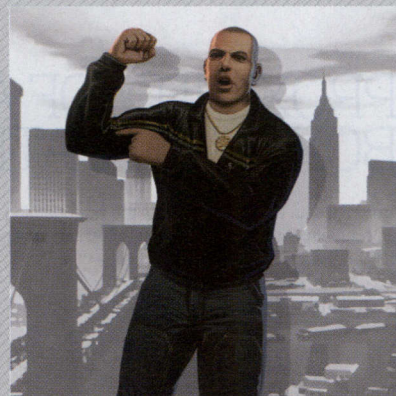
Beyond Good & Evil's Uncle Pey'j is a jolly pig-man (that's right, Jerry – pig-man). He zips around on fart-powered rocket boots – which is a sweet concept for a spin-off racing game. Not since the 16-bit era's *Boogerman*, or the *Abe's Oddysee* series, has flatulence been harnessed in such practical ways. All games should have a fart button. There. We said it.



### 6

#### THE BALLAD OF BI-CURIOS BRUCIE

GTAIV's Brucie Kibbutz has juiced himself up on way too much Chilean bull shark testosterone and he'd make a fascinating protagonist. Gameplay would involve flexing, trying to pick up guys (jokingly?), cage fighting against his brother Mori, and just being a giant douche-nozzle in general. The ultimate jerk simulator.



### 8

#### THE GUN-ARMED MAN

Standing in stark contrast to *FFVII*'s emo clone boy, Cloud, is Barret. Homeboy had a gun surgically implanted on his arm. Take a few seconds to let that awesomeness sink in. Realistically, Barret could be dropped into any action-game mold you like, you could even add in a wise-cracking sidekick who rags on him for only having one hand to both wipe and eat with.



### 9

#### HORSE BALLS OF STEEL

Every steed we've ever sat on has been a flighty bundle on nerves. Not Agro. You could drop a tactical nuke next to Agro and he'd stick by you. Can you imagine what sort of guts and loyalty it'd take to allow yourself to be galloped toward a hulking colossus of death? We think it'd be a spin-off that would tie in with the aforementioned 'bowel control' mechanic.



### 1

#### SERGEANT RL-3: COMMIE KILLER

*Star Wars*' C3PO unfairly typecasts robots as sissy translators. Conversely, *Fallout 3*'s Sergeant RL-3 (Gutsy-class robotic soldier) has his balls of steel welded on and interprets any incoming communication as a commie insult. What would be the title of his own spin-off game? Well, Sergeant RL-3 is quite the comical fellow, yelling out patriotic and Red Scare slogans to everyone he meets. We would therefore recommend titling the game: "Ready to die for your country, you commie son of a bitch?". Or "I'll put my boot so far up your ass you'll cough up boot polish". Or perhaps even: "Typical chicken-shit commie manoeuvre". Oo-rah!

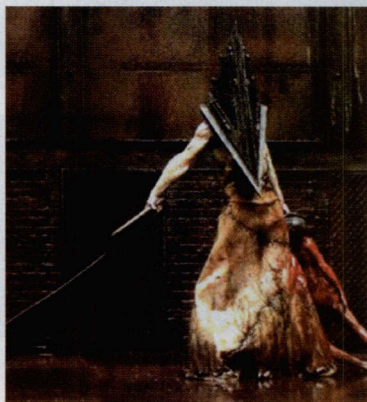




4

#### HEY THERE, BOY!

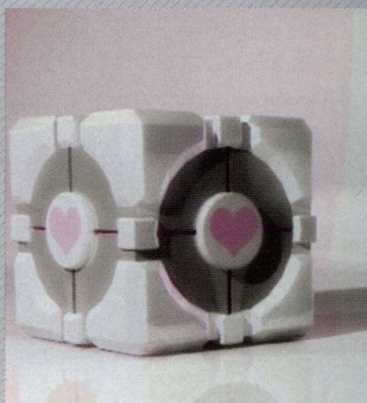
*Silent Hill 2*'s Pyramid Head is disturbing. In his spin-off title we're foreseeing some sort of 'run for your life, lest you get shagged' action title. It's an extremely edgy concept, without a doubt. But after all these years, dying has become too blasé. The fear of impending rape would ratchet the tension right back up to 11. On second thoughts; no. This would suck.



7

#### INANIMATE FUN, AH-OY!

The Weighted Companion Cube in *Portal* was the gaming equivalent of Paris Hilton; a thick, primarily plastic comprised, entity that got famous for... well, being famous. The Internet latched on to it however – and what the Internet wants, the Internet gets. Including a crappy spin-off game where you get to play as the utterly inanimate, guileless box itself. Woo.



10

#### BEING USELESS

As a side-kick, Ashley Graham from *Resident Evil 4* brings nothing to the table. The only two things she can do well is detect when you're trying to see up her skirt and screaming out at the top of her lungs. We therefore propose a spin-off game where you play as a helpless, Lemming-brained, side-kick who is rewarded for putting their life in needless jeopardy.



ELIJAH WOOD JOHN C. REILLY JENNIFER CONNELLY CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER CRISPIN GLOVER MARTIN LANDAU

FROM PRODUCERS TIM BURTON (CORPSE BRIDE, ALICE IN WONDERLAND) AND TIMUR BEKMAMBEV (DIRECTOR OF WANTED) DIRECTED BY ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE SHANE ACKER SCREENPLAY BY PAMELA PETTLER

WHEN  
OUR  
WORLD  
ENDED  
THEIR  
MISSION  
BEGAN



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MADMAN.COM.AU/9



## INFOCUS

## GRAN TURISMO 5

By the time you read this, *GT5* should have been out in Japan. But it's *not*; the March release date was missed. Again. Check out these new shots while we wait. Sigh...



Night racing. It's freaking sexy



There are two cars here. There'll be 998 or so others in the game







"Half a million bucks? Where's the cup holder? Damn it!"

No detail is spared...

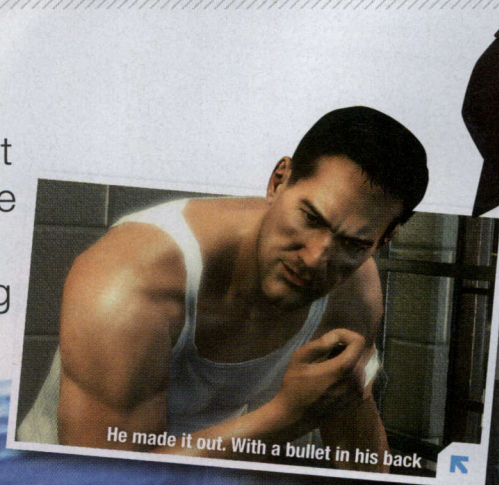
...including functioning air brakes



## INFOCUS

# PRISON BREAK: THE CONSPIRACY

From the small-screen to... the small-screen. Will it be worth hitting the showers with, or will we be throwing away the key?

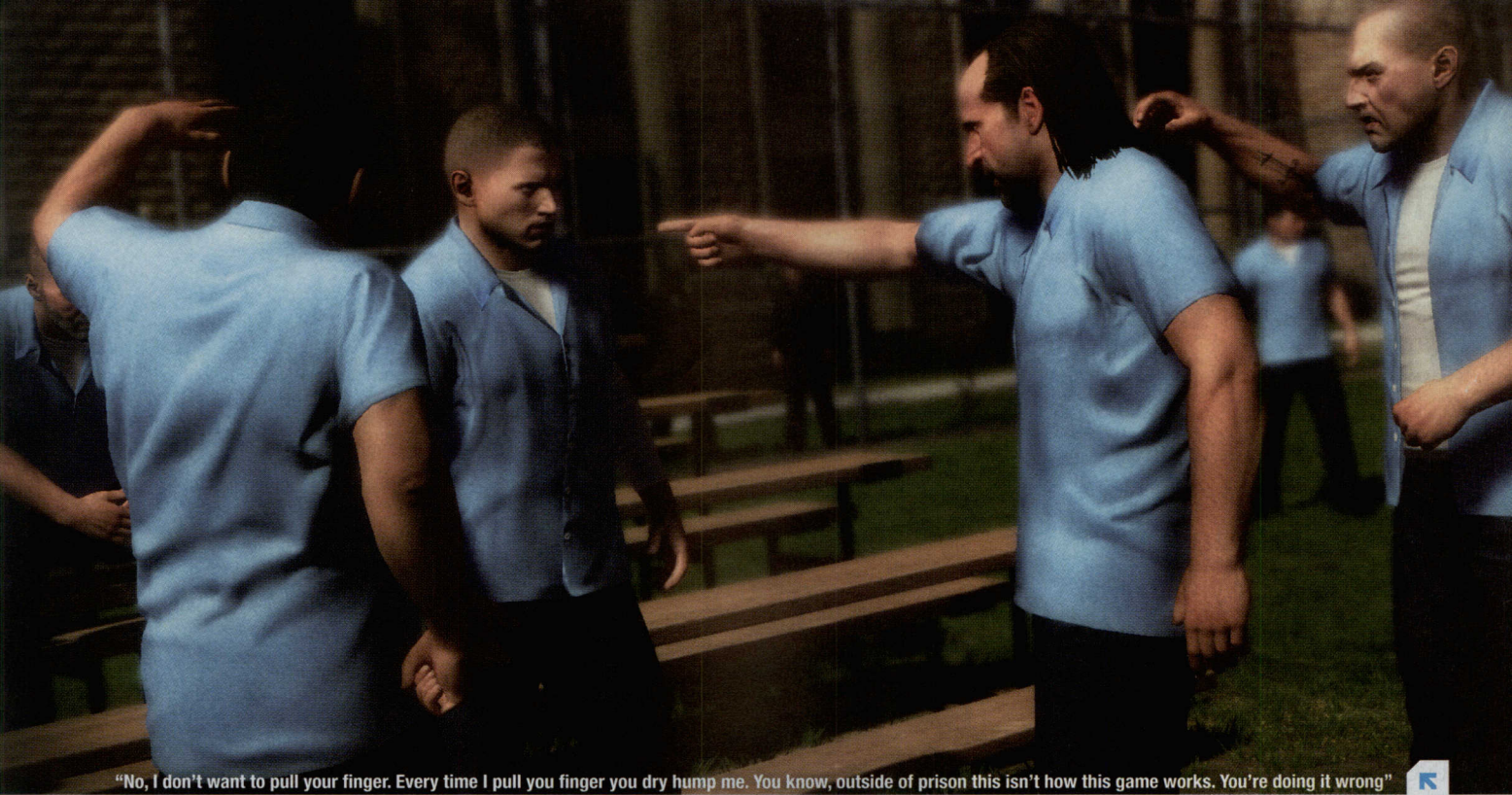


He made it out. With a bullet in his back

"Oh my. It's like a baby's arm holding an apple. You have the right to remain silent baby"

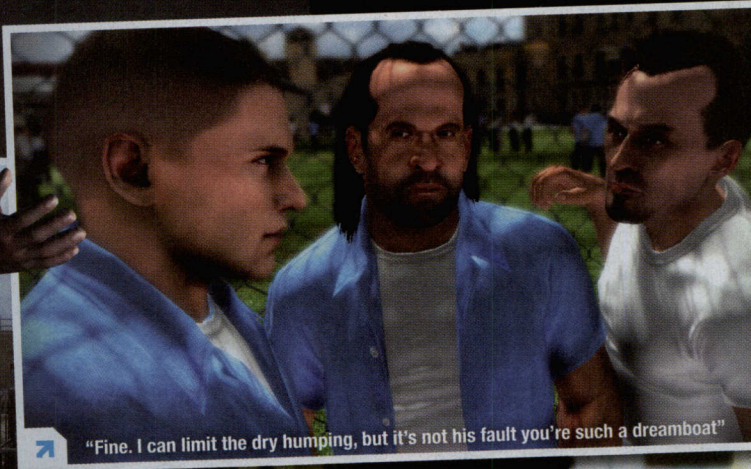
"...and this wing is where we keep all the bogans who put Chevy badges on their Australian-built Commodores. Gonna put a Daewoo badge on your Barina too pal?"





"No, I don't want to pull your finger. Every time I pull your finger you dry hump me. You know, outside of prison this isn't how this game works. You're doing it wrong"

Just hanging around...



"Fine. I can limit the dry humping, but it's not his fault you're such a dreamboat"

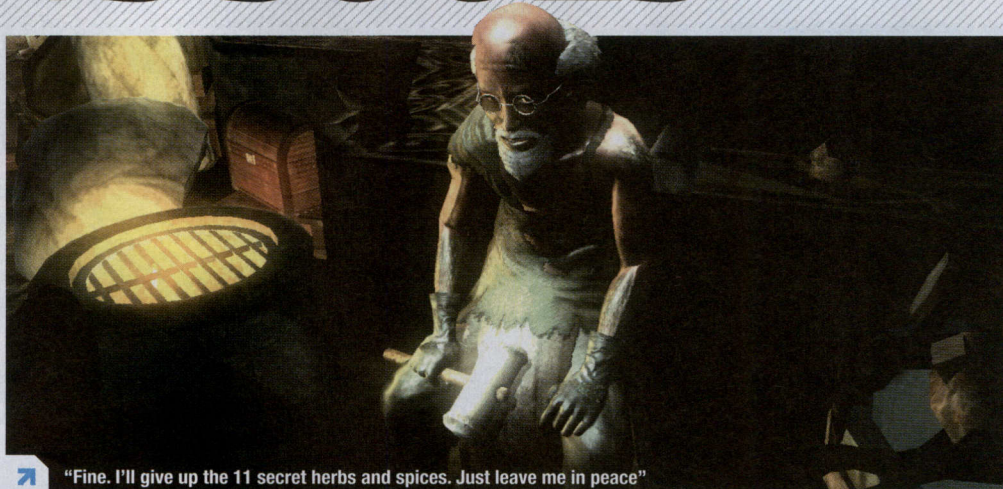




## INFOCUS

## DEMON'S SOULS

The grammatically-challenged yet critically-acclaimed slasher is finally coming to our shores. Here's a glimpse of what this bad-boy looks like in the flesh.



“Fine. I’ll give up the 11 secret herbs and spices. Just leave me in peace”

“Argh, my souls! I am one demon with many of them! Curse your possessive apostrophe rules!”







“Build a bridge, they said. Get over it, they said”

“We’ll meet again, He-Man!”



Harder than a coffin nail, this game





# AROUND THE WORLD **IN PS3**

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming

## CALIFORNIA, USA **GOD OF WAR**

A California federal judge has thrown out a copyright infringement claim by two individuals who said they conceived the idea behind the game *God of War*. Jonathan Bissoon-Dath and Jennifer Dath claimed *God of War* mirrors screenplays they had written, but Judge Marilyn Hall Patel disagreed. "No one can own the basic idea for a story," Patel stated. Makes sense, otherwise we wouldn't have seen a single cop movie since *Die Hard*.



## GLASGOW, SCOTLAND **THE NEED FOR SPEED**

Scottish police, from Strathclyde (near Glasgow) are currently rolling in a \$100,000 Audi Q7 they recently seized from a criminal gang. Apparently this won't be the last time they do it either. We've been used to seeing some exotic police cars in *NFS: Undercover* and *Burnout Paradise*, but we're going to start making custom police liveries for all our ridiculously expensive cars in any game we can. A fuzz Veyron, anyone?



## BERN, SWITZERLAND **BAN THIS SICK FILTH**

Switzerland's government has pushed through legislation that could eventually see a ban put on the sale of violent videogames. The two motions passed will likely make it illegal to sell or make a game with a PEGI rating of 16+ and 18+. According to reports by GamesMarket.de, the motion itself carries no legal implications yet – but those are to be set up by the government following its successful passing.



## PENRITH, HERE **JUST ONE MORE HIT?**

Australian researchers believe around 8 per cent of people who play video games may be suffering symptoms of addiction. A team led by associate professor Vladan Starcevic at the Psychological Medicine Department of Nepean Hospital surveyed close to 2000 gamers aged over 14 and found 156 may have a problem. MMORPGs were the biggest offenders, so fear not. Go back to your PS3s people.



## CANBERRA, HERE **NOT SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN**

The call for submissions regarding the introduction of an R18+ rating for videogames in Australia has generated more than 55,000 of the buggers. Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor has welcomed the high number of responses, which is apparently significantly larger than the regular response rate to Government reviews. Hopefully this will be the last kick in the guts this debate needs.



## INTERNATIONAL CHARTS



**UK**

Source: ELSPA

- 1 God of War III *Sony*
- 2 Battlefield: Bad Company 2 *EA*
- 3 Final Fantasy XIII *Square Enix*
- 4 Heavy Rain *Sony*
- 5 Modern Warfare 2 *Activision*
- 6 Uncharted 2: Among Thieves *Sony*
- 7 MotoGP 09/10 *Capcom*
- 8 Aliens vs Predator *Sega*
- 9 FIFA 10 *EA*
- 10 Assassin's Creed II *Ubisoft*



**JAPAN**

Source: VGCHARTZ

- 1 Battlefield: Bad Company 2 *EA*
- 2 Nobunaga no Yabou: Tendou *Koei*
- 3 BioHazard 5 *Capcom*
- 4 Demon's Souls *Sony*
- 5 Star Ocean The Last Hope *Square Enix*
- 6 Ryu Ga Gotoku 3 *Sega*
- 7 End of Eternity *Sega*
- 8 MGS 4: Guns of the Patriots *Konami*
- 9 MAG *Sony*
- 10 Sacred 2: Fallen Angel *Spike*



**USA**

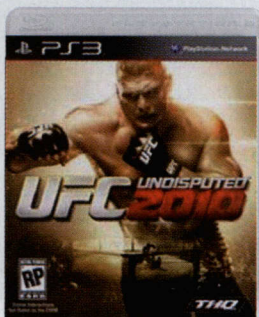
Source: NPD

- 1 Final Fantasy XIII *Square Enix*
- 2 Battlefield: Bad Company 2 *EA*
- 3 Heavy Rain *Sony*
- 4 Modern Warfare 2 *Activision*
- 5 Yakuza 3 *Sega*
- 6 MLB 10: The Show *Sony*
- 7 God of War Collection *Sony*
- 8 Resident Evil 5 *Capcom*
- 9 Aliens vs Predator *Sega*
- 10 BioShock 2 *2K*



# PRE-ORDER PARADISE

The hottest deals, the coolest stuff - what are you waiting for?



## UFC UNDISPUTED 2010

*UFC Undisputed 2010* is the only mixed martial arts (MMA) videogame that delivers the action, intensity and prestige of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). Step into the Octagon to experience the most advanced and commanding virtual MMA action with more than 100 of the best UFC fighters in the world. Experience intelligent and intuitive combat, increased fighter customisation, robust career progression, challenging new gameplay modes and explosive online offerings.

### JB HIFI

**Price:** \$99 (online)

**Estimated Dispatch Date:** 25 May 2010

### EB GAMES

**Price:** \$108 (online)

**Estimated Dispatch Date:** 3 February 2010

### Special Offer:

Bonus exclusive to EB Games:  
Preorder to receive an exclusive bonus *UFC Undisputed 2010* Four Character Unlock!



## RED DEAD REDEMPTION

*Red Dead Redemption* features an open-world environment for players to explore, including frontier towns, rolling prairies teeming with wildlife, and perilous mountain passes. Along the way, players will experience the heat of gunfights and battles, meet a host of unique characters, struggle against the harshness of one of the world's last remaining wildernesses, and ultimately pick their own precarious path through an epic story about the death of the Wild West and the gunslingers that inhabited it.

### EB GAMES

**Price:** \$118

**Estimated Dispatch Date:** 21 May 2010

### Special Offer:

*Red Dead Redemption Limited Edition* contains:

- \* Soundtrack
- \* Extra DLC via PSN including:
  - Deadly Assassin Outfit
  - War Horse
  - Golden Guns Weapon Pack

**Exclusive EB Games Pre-order Bonus includes:**

- \* Brady Games miniguide



## LOST PLANET 2

A decade has passed since the original *Lost Planet* game, and the face of E.D.N. III has changed dramatically. Terra forming efforts have been successful and the ice has begun to melt, giving way to lush tropical jungles and harsh unforgiving deserts. Players will enter this new environment and follow the exploits of their own customised snow pirate on their quest to seize control of the changing planet.

### EB GAMES

**Price:** \$128

**Estimated Dispatch Date:** 20 May 2010

### Exclusive EB Games Offer:

- \* Akrid Figurine \* PS3 Premium Theme
- \* Four postcards \* 'Making of' DVD

## DEAD TO RIGHTS: RETRIBUTION

Returning to Grant City, a boom town gone bust that is falling to the worst excesses of crime, greed and corruption; *Dead to Rights: Retribution* follows vice cop Jack Slate as he fights to expose shadowy figures that will stop at nothing to exert their deadly influence over the crumbling metropolis.

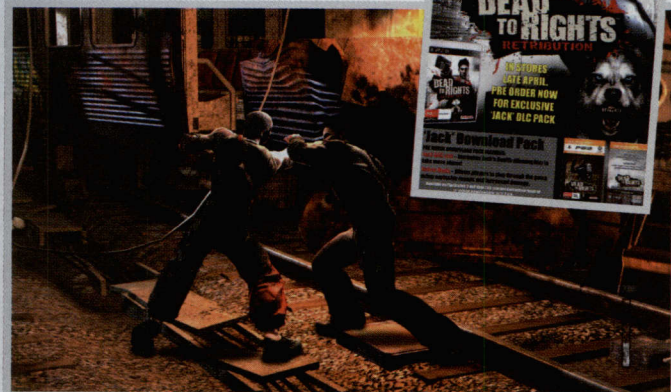
### JB HIFI

**Price:** \$95 (online)

**Estimated Dispatch Date:** 22 April 2010

### Exclusive JB HIFI Pre-order Bonus includes:

- \* Bonus DLC via PSN
- Jack GAC Suit (increases Jack's health)
- Action Mode (grants the ability to play through the game using explosive rounds. Booyah!)





## THIS MONTH

Your 30-day planner of games and goodness!

### APRIL 8 KICK-ASS

It's the comic-book movie that will shake your perception of what comic book movies are about. Funny, action-packed and adult, we're already quoting lines from it. Plus, Hit Girl will totally rock your world. Kick ass? Absolutely. In cinemas now!



APRIL  
25

#### ANZAC DAY

April 25 marks the 95th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings and, unless you're a communist or a Jehovah's Witness, it's when we remember Australian and New Zealand men and women fought, and died, in the service of their countries. Keep it respectful, and let's just be stoked the only wars most of us will ever need to fight are in *Call of Duty*.



APRIL  
27  
- MAY 2

#### TARGA TASMANIA

The world's toughest tarmac rally, the Targa Tasmania is a 2,000km event comprising of around 40 special closed road stages. It attracts more than 250 entries.



#### IRON MAN 2

The follow-up to the (frankly quite awesome) superhero smash *Iron Man* begins screening in cinemas today. We expect a shitload of explosions and AC/DC, so expect us to be waiting in line ahead of you.

APRIL 29



APRIL 30

#### SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

Beat 'em up fans rejoice, because the ultimate version of the ultimate brawler is out now. *Super Street Fighter IV* is going to rule your life even longer than the last one. Pull up your Maximum Pants and unleash hell.



APRIL 30

#### ICC WORLD TWENTY20

We don't like cricket. Oh no, we love it. The T20 World Cup kicks off today in the West Indies. The Kiwi campaign begins today against Sri Lanka, and the Aussies first clash is on May 2 against Pakistan.



MAY 6

#### SHERLOCK HOLMES

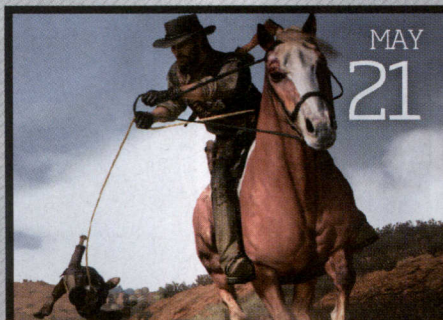
Guy Ritchie's damn entertaining *Sherlock Holmes* is available on DVD today. The best way we can describe it is *Lethal Weapon 2* meets ye olde England, and with Robert Downey, Jr. leading the way you can't go wrong.



MAY 13

#### ROBIN HOOD

Director Ridley Scott and frequent collaborator Russell Crowe bring this big-budget Robin Hood reboot to the big screen today. Should be worth a watch.



MAY 21

#### RED DEAD REDEMPTION

One of our most-anticipated games of 2010 hits shelves today, and you better believe that we'll be playing the crap out of it. Giddy-up.



MAY 26

#### STATE OF ORIGIN - GAME 1

The titans of rugby league clash in sport's greatest rivalry. Can the Blues end the Maroon winning streak this year? We bloody hope so.



## RELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you...

## OUT NOW

**BioShock 2**  
Genre: Shooter  
Distributor: 2K

**MAG**  
Genre: Shooter  
Distributor: Sony

**Star Ocean: The Last Hope - International**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Guitar Hero: Van Halen**  
Genre: Music  
Distributor: Activision

**Heavy Rain**  
Genre: Adventure  
Distributor: Sony

**White Knight Chronicles**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Sony

**Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: THQ

**Aliens vs Predator**  
Genre: Shooter  
Distributor: Sega

**Battlefield: Bad Company 2**  
Genre: Shooter  
Distributor: EA

**Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing**  
Genre: Racing  
Distributor: Sega

**Final Fantasy XIII**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Tony Hawk: RIDE**  
Genre: Sports  
Distributor: Activision

**Yakuza 3**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Sega

**Karaoke Revolution**  
Genre: Music  
Distributor: Mindscape

**God of War III**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Sony

**MotoGP 09/10**  
Genre: Racing  
Distributor: THQ

**Resonance of Fate**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Sega

**BlazBlue**  
Genre: Fighting  
Distributor: AIE

**Grand Theft Auto: Episodes from Liberty City**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Rockstar

## APRIL 2010

**Dead to Rights: Retribution**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

**Clash of the Titans**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

**Super Street Fighter IV**  
Genre: Fighting  
Distributor: THQ

**Iron Man 2**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Sega

**2010 FIFA World Cup**  
Genre: Sports  
Distributor: EA

**Just Cause 2**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

## MAY 2010

**Red Dead Redemption**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Rockstar

**Lost Planet 2**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: THQ

**LEGO Harry Potter**  
Genre: Family  
Distributor: Warner Bros.

**Prince of Persia: The Forgotten Sands**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

## JUNE 2010

**Blur**  
Genre: Racing  
Distributor: Activision

**Mafia II**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: 2K

## TBC 2010

**Dead Rising 2**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: THQ

**Fallout: New Vegas**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

**Ghost Recon: Future Soldier**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Castlevania: Lords of Shadow**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Mindscape

**WRC**  
Genre: Racing  
Distributor: AIE

**L.A. Noire**  
Genre: Adventure  
Distributor: Rockstar

**Gran Turismo 5**  
Genre: Racing  
Distributor: Sony

**Alpha Protocol**  
Genre: RPG  
Distributor: Sega

**Enslaved**  
Genre: Adventure  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

**The Last Guardian**  
Genre: Adventure  
Distributor: Sony

**Max Payne 3**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Rockstar

**Agent**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: Rockstar

**Majin: The Fallen Realm**  
Genre: Adventure  
Distributor: Namco Bandai Partners

**R.U.S.E.**  
Genre: RTS  
Distributor: Ubisoft

**Backbreaker**  
Genre: Sports  
Distributor: AIE

**Spec Ops: The Line**  
Genre: Action  
Distributor: 2K

**ModNation Racers**  
Genre: Racing  
Distributor: Sony

**AFL 2010**  
Genre: Sports  
Distributor: Sony

## AUSSIE CHARTS



**1 God of War III**  
Genre: Adventure Distributor: Sony



**2 Final Fantasy XIII**  
Genre: RPG Distributor: Ubisoft



**3 Battlefield: Bad Company 2**  
Genre: Shooter Distributor: EA



**4 Heavy Rain**  
Genre: Adventure Distributor: Sony



**5 Modern Warfare 2**  
Genre: Shooter Distributor: Activision



**6 FIFA 10**  
Genre: Sports Distributor: EA



**7 Madden 10**  
Genre: Sports Distributor: EA



**8 Uncharted 2: Among Thieves**  
Genre: Action Distributor: Sony



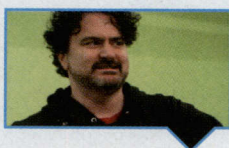
**9 MotoGP 09/10**  
Genre: Racing Distributor: THQ



**10 R&C: A Crack in Time**  
Genre: Adventure Distributor: Sony

## QUOTE UNQUOTE

Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



"Getting mad at Activision for this kind of thing is like getting mad at an ape for throwing feces. It's just how the beast communicates."

**Tim Schafer**, via Twitter, on the Infinity Ward debacle.



"I think there are talented people on the Labor backbench who deserve a go."

**Former SA Attorney-General Michael Atkinson** on stepping down. Hopefully he means smarter and younger.



"I don't know when you'll see announcements about it, but I can promise you a Killzone 3."

**SCEA president Jack Tretton** ruins the surprise for everyone.



"We have a lot of respect for them, but there's nothing in that game that would entice me or anyone I know that's an MMA fan to buy it."

**UFC VP Don Gold** on EA's upcoming MMA game.



## OPINION

NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW  
= FOURTH-FIFTHS  
OF BUGGER ALL?

Question: when is downloadable content not downloadable content? Answer: when I've already paid good fricken money for it and already physically hold it in my mitts.

*BioShock 2*'s first DLC pack, Sinclair Solutions, features a rank increase to level 50, two new playable characters, 20 new trials, a third weapon upgrade for each weapon and five additional masks. Weighing in at \$6.95, this rather substantial pack is going for an absolute steal – and in the 'highway robbery' sense of the term it seems.

You see, some wily interweb folk noticed that the download size of said pack was an anorexic 103KB. In layman's terms; 2K would need to have a coding ninja Jesus in its employ in order to squeeze such wondrous content down into such an itty-kilobit footprint. This strongly suggested that the "downloadable content" on offer was, in fact, already printed on the game disc.

The gentle concern of a few *BioShock* fans was put forth to a 2K community manager on the 2K forums in a quasi-polite Internet manner (read: with plenty of OMGs WTFs and STFUs sprinkled in). 2K's response read thusly: "The way our engine and game structure works is that people need to have the exact same content for people to play together. One of the challenges with post launch content for MP is that it can split the player base, and we want to avoid that whenever possible. For this content, creating the DLC package the way we did

allowed for us to not split the player base – so whether you purchase the new content or not, you can still play with your friends."

Now, at this point I should apologise for reprinting – and thereby befouling – the magazine you're holding with a steaming pile of b-u-l-l-s-h-i-t. Here's a cleaner explanation of your *BioShock 2* situation: we've just sold you an entire house, but locked a large room where all the kick-arse furniture is. You now have to cough up 7% of what the entire house is worth again, to make us hand you a key that'll unlock it. Furthermore, if you try to force that door open by any other means you'll almost certainly be labelled a burglar. In your own home.

Honestly, who's to say what the suits will eventually try to get us to bend over for next? "Hey there slick, having issues with our game's checkpoint system? Well, for an extra five bucks we'll throw in our Save Feature DLC! Oh hey, while you're at it chief, we're running a special 10% off discount if you also purchase the Jump & Run Button 'Skillz Pack'. And don't forget our super-popular Pause Function DLC – shit's a showstopper, son!"

I think you can see where we're all headed here: Rortsville. If you do feel like voicing your own displeasure, just remember that Internet forums are bloody useless – the beast only communicates via dollar signs.

**Adam Mathew** would totally buy Nude Code DLC, and is a hypocrite in that sense.

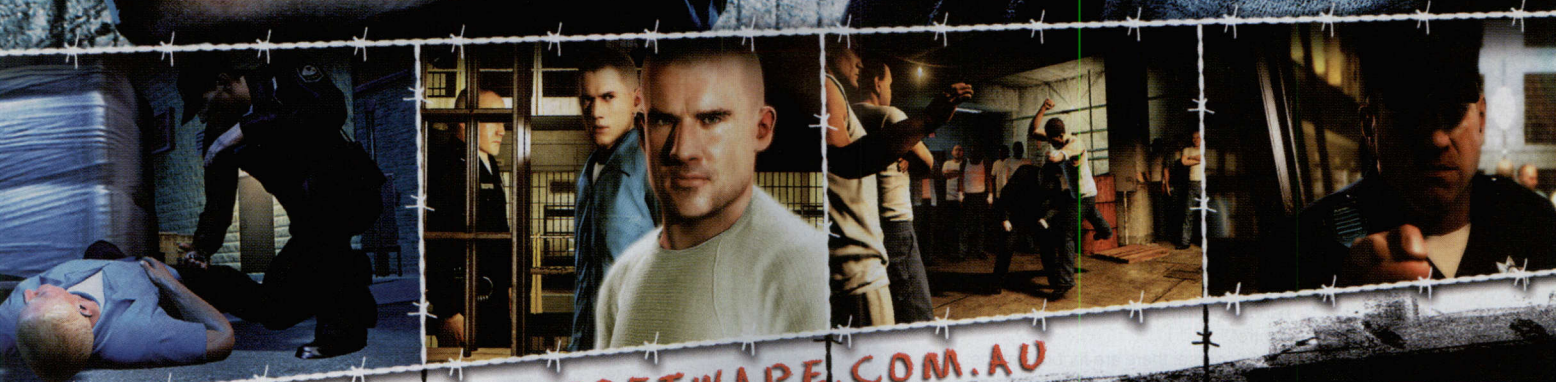


“Well, for an extra five bucks we'll throw in our **Save Feature DLC!**”



# A NEW CON, A NEW CONSPIRACY

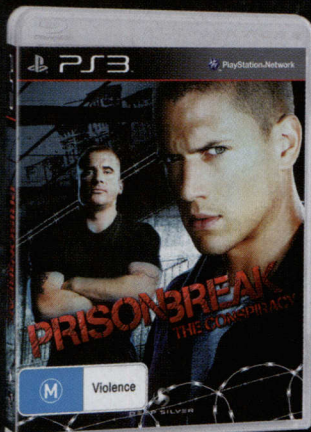
## PRISONBREAK THE CONSPIRACY



VISIT [WWW.QVSOFTWARE.COM.AU](http://WWW.QVSOFTWARE.COM.AU)

PS3

CAN YOU SURVIVE  
FOX RIVER  
PENITENTIARY?



Also on PC & XB360

Distributed By

QVS

Interactive Entertainment Specialists



DEEP SILVER

AVAILABLE FROM

GAME

The next level

JB Hi-Fi

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## OPINION

THE  
JERK  
STORE  
CALLED

People. They love to knee-jerk and whinge, and the Internet is the perfect place for people to crank their virtual limb and sink a misguided patella into the crutch of ideas they just don't like within three seconds of hearing about it. Just after March 11 when Sony took to the stage at the GDC, knee-jerkers and their absolute, black and white, with-us-or-against-us attitude were out in force, patrolling the Internet and offering their point of view on something that they knew little about. In this case, the PlayStation Move.

The quotes below are from a variety of sources, some more reputable than others (knee-jerkers are everywhere, so the source is a moot point).

"Looks like crap. How about someone comes up with a new idea instead of copying another... Can you say 'desperate attempt'?"

"I thought the black Wii was already out?"

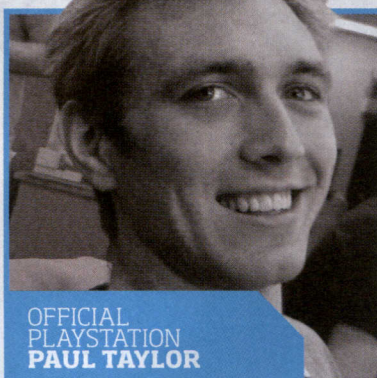
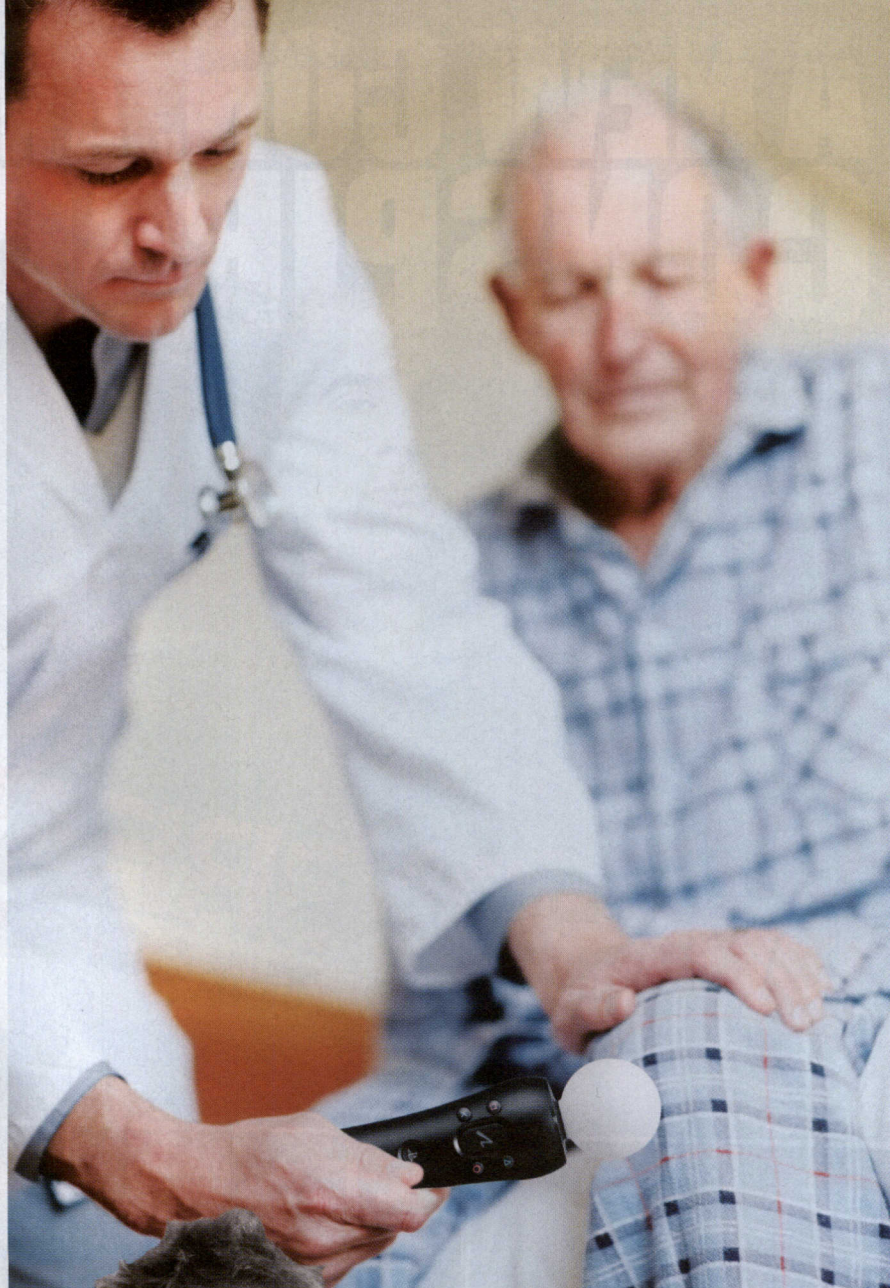
"This motion control crap is getting out of hand. No gamer with a PS3... wants motion control."

Of course, there are fanboys at the opposite end of the criticism spectrum

"For me Move stomps on Wii and spits on its grave." At least this person didn't make their comment an all-encompassing statement intended for the rest of mankind, but the clarity of it does nothing apart from fuel an "us versus them" attitude.

As I write this, I haven't had the opportunity to test the PlayStation Move, and even if I had I'd be a complete tool if I didn't realise that it's probably going to take a couple of years before the potential of Move is fully realised. Yes, on the surface there is a resemblance to the Wii controller, but while they may do similar things the way in which they do them is different. Check out our news piece a few pages back for the low down.

Without someone trying something new, we'd still be driving Model T Fords, using Internet Explorer version 2 on our IBMs and having to lug mobile phones the size of your forearm around. Move might not be a revolution, but it's certainly an evolution that builds upon one of the most commercially successful videogame inventions of the last 10 years.



In your lounge room is one of the most advanced pieces of entertainment you've ever seen. PS4 is a hell of a long way off, and Sony, along with a few other companies, are going to keep pushing the boundaries of what it means to be entertained. The big S is no slouch, and you can bet your arse that they want you to keep using and playing on their consoles. Move is just one way of them doing that. Embrace the idea: you might just find something new to not hate.

**Paul Taylor** is motion controlled. If you tilt him forward he falls over.

“Embrace the idea: you might just find something new to not hate”



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## OPINION

# BONED!

In a bizarre sequence of events Infinity Ward co-founders Jason West (president and game director) and Vince Zampella (CEO) have been fired by Activision.

To put it simply, two of the key minds behind *Modern Warfare 2* have been boned. Activision claims Infinity Ward's two most senior staff were sacked due to "breaches of contract and insubordination." West and Zampella don't appear to agree, and are bringing a lawsuit against Activision.

The press release announcing the suit claims that Activision was scheduled to pay "substantial royalty payments" for *Modern Warfare 2* but fired them just before the date of the payment.

"Activision has refused to honor the terms

of its agreements and is intentionally flouting the fundamental public policy of this State (California) that employers must pay their employees what they have rightfully earned," said their attorney Robert Schwartz. "Instead of thanking, lauding, or just plain paying Jason and Vince for giving Activision the most successful entertainment product ever offered to the public, last month Activision hired lawyers to conduct a pretextual 'investigation' into unstated and unsubstantiated charges of 'insubordination' and 'breach of fiduciary duty,' which then became the grounds for their termination on Monday, March 1st."

"We were shocked by Activision's decision to terminate our contract," said West. "We poured our heart and soul into that company, building not only a world class development studio, but assembling a team we've been proud to work with for nearly a decade. We think the work we've done speaks for itself."

Zampella added, "After all we have given to Activision, we shouldn't have to sue to get paid."

What does all this mean for Joe PlayStation? Dick, probably. Regardless of who's screwing who here, this fight will unfold over oak desks in the offices of high-powered lawyer-types. The average gamer would likely struggle to give two halves of a single shit what's going on here.

We wonder, however, whether Activision has really thought this through. Activision maintains it "firmly believes that its decision was justified based on their course of conduct and actions." But can you ever really afford to

get the staff of the developer responsible for the most successful entertainment product ever entirely offside?

When Paul visited Infinity Ward last year for the *Modern Warfare 2* multiplayer event we noted some of the custom classes set up by the Activision-owned developers were named 'Scepticism', 'Pessimism' and 'Fear' – in reference to the now-infamous quote by Activision CEO Bobby Kotick ("The goal that I had in bringing a lot of the packaged goods folks that we brought into Activision 10 years ago was to take all the fun out making video games. I think we've definitely been able to instill in the culture the scepticism and pessimism and fear that you should have in an economy like we're in today.")

Was this just a well-meaning dig at their corporate overlords, or was it a one-fingered salute to the powers-that-be? If it was the latter, surely these shenanigans will be reason enough for many of the crew there need to move on, en masse.

Funnily enough, that's how Infinity Ward begun in the first place. Infinity Ward was founded when 22 members of 2015, Inc., the developer of the incredible *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault*, up and left. *Call of Duty* was the result, which was roughly when the wheels fell of the *Medal of Honor* series.

Who says history never repeats?

You know, aside from Split Enz.

**Angry Sackboy** has been fired four times, and twice by the same person.

“To put it simply, two of the key minds behind *Modern Warfare 2* have been boned”



# NIER



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# COMPETITIONS

WIN! WIN! WIN!



**WIN!**

## DIGITAL DESTINY!

Thanks to Sega we have 10 copies of its latest RPG, *Resonance of Fate*, to give away. Utilising a unique fighting system where all three combatants form to make a mighty triumvirate of guns, grenades and special effects, this adventure puts an addictive twist on the usual Japanese RPG formula. For your chance to win, simply answer this question and follow the entry instructions below.

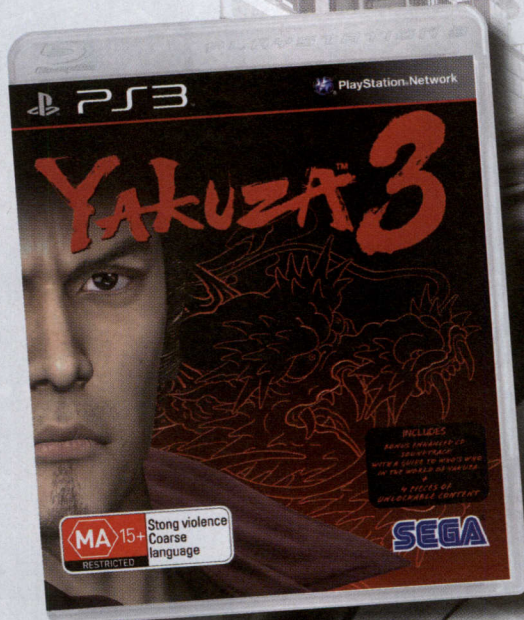
**Question:** In 25 words or less, which two sidekicks would you want in a fight, and why?

**WIN!**

## WAY OF THE DRAGON

Thanks again to Sega we have 10 copies of the latest in the brutal saga of Kazuma Kiryu to be released in Australia, *Yakuza 3*. Walk in the shoes of Kaz as he revisits the past, righting wrongs and tries to save an orphanage by way of the fist. Plus, he loves to show off his massive dragon tattoo. This action-packed RPG has been celebrated worldwide, and this is your chance to win a copy! Simply answer the question below and follow our entry instructions.

**Question:** In 25 words or less, what would your animal tattoo be if you were a street-fighting warrior, and why?



## HOW TO ENTER

To enter *Official PlayStation Magazine* competitions email your entries to [ops@themediafactory.com.au](mailto:ops@themediafactory.com.au) with the name of the competition ONLY in the subject line. Email entries are entitled to one entry (multiple entries will be deleted!). Alternatively, send clearly marked postal entries to **OPS competitions PO BOX 1037, Bondi Junction 1355**. Please include your name, age and address with your answer on the back of an envelope. Chance plays no part in determining winners. Competitions close 25/05/2010. Winners will be notified by mail.



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## DUE SOUTH

LETTER OF THE MONTH

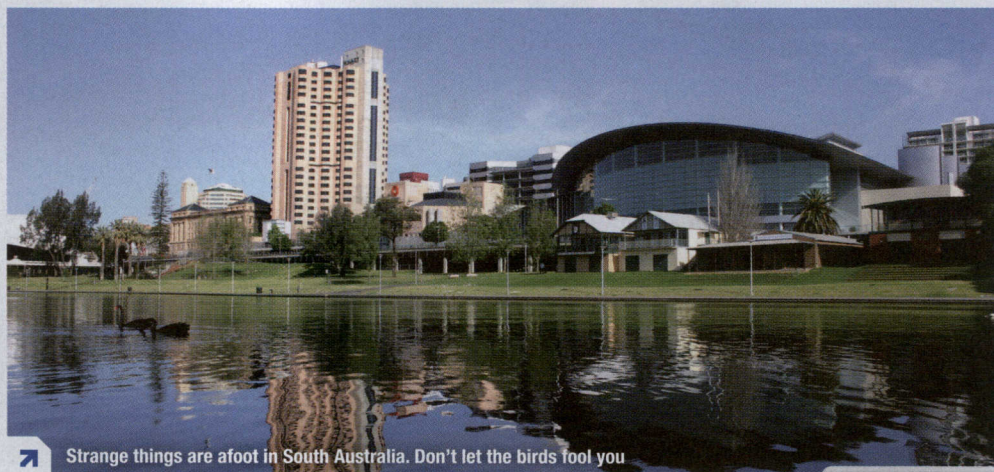
I was sitting in bed when my husband came running up the hallway, having read his favourite PlayStation magazine from cover to cover. He gave me the Angry Sackboy article on the R18+ classification and what they mean in South Australia.

I fully support your views on the classification of games and I do think that the powers that be in the government here really are narrow minded pinheads who seem to have arrived early, worked hard to make everything complicated for everyone and then forgotten to have the good grace to leave.

My husband and I moved to South Australia for his job and after we took the hour or so to look at the churches, I worked for the wine industry for a year or so, we moved around a bit to sample with natives and came to the same conclusion as Angry Sackboy. That being, that there really is something wrong with this state!

I do have to disagree with the statement that we're just a dead canoeist from *Deliverance*. We're way past those pig-snogging inbreds. How? Well, have you heard of the Snowtown situation that we had going on here a while back and the fact that, per capita, SA (I'm certain that this is a point of pride way down in the deep dark heart of native South Australians everywhere) has the most serial killers than any other place in the world?

We're just getting started. We live in a rather interesting part of outer metro Adelaide and every day is an adventure. Not only are we the only people in our street to own a car worth more than our TV, but we also seem to be the only people on our side of town who know that it's NOT normal to live on your front lawn, name



Strange things are afoot in South Australia. Don't let the birds fool you

your children after brands of booze or spend a large part of a Friday night hanging out at the local servo/shopping mall.

To sum up, no there's not a whole lot to do here and trust me when I tell you that we can't live here either, with the cost of living and the 1980s wages they try to pass off as normal. We're against creeping conservatism as well and just as soon as we can we'll be voting with our feet and leaving. But until then, buckle up boys - we gonna take piggy for a lil' ride! Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

**Teresse Bremner-Macdonald, SA**

**Looks like the hefty swing against Labor in the SA election means you're not alone in**

**being unhappy with the state of things in your state. At least Michael Atkinson has stood down. That's a start. Have a game. You don't sound like you've got much else to do.**

**If there are any other South Australians concerned about how things are going down there write in and let us know. This ridiculous situation with any and all R18+ rated DVDs being only permitted to be sold in plain black boxes sounds absolutely batshit stupid - we just don't know how you can put up with it.**

**On the other hand, if there are any South Australians who just want to tear Angry Sackboy a new one, his address is...**



**Letter of the Month wins a copy of: JUST CAUSE 2**

Congratulations Teresse! Turn to page 68 for all the reasons you're going to love this game!

## CUTTINGS

### BURNING JAPANESE

*Yakuza 3* is a piece of shit.  
**Angelo Cupellini, via Facebook**

*Yakuza 3* isn't for everyone, agreed, but one man's trash is another man's treasure. Us not liking Nickelback hasn't stopped them from winning around 26 various music awards. Yes. There are actually people who think so highly of Nickelback that they're prepared to award them things.

### CULT QUESTION

Isn't Angry Sackboy afraid offending Exclusive Brethren when he referred to them in his column?  
**Glen, via email**

He's not afraid of offending anybody. Besides, we doubt they read our magazines. They don't own TVs.



Kratos will punch your face off. He's done it before

## HUMAN ERROR

Hi OPS, since you've been getting so many praise emails, I'd like to mock you guys a bit, especially with all the delayed games, so let's begin. HAHA! Remember when you thought *God of War III* was going to be released in 2009! And when you put it as the top expected game of 2009! Oh man, that's rich. Or when you put *Mafia II* and *Heavy Rain* on the list too? Oh man, was that disappointing?

**Saed Batshoan, via email**

**Hey, it's not our fault games get delayed. But we're not going to take this personally. Sniff.**

## CHILD'S PLAY

Hi to the OPS Australia team.

I have been a gamer for more years than I care to remember, and I now have a six-year-old son who loves the PS3 as well. A while ago I was going to write to you bemoaning the lack of games for children on the PS3, but in recent months, with the likes of the *EyePet*, *Mini Ninjas*, *Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing* and the never-ending *LEGO* games, this seems to be changing.

I am now writing about the lack of coverage these games receive in your otherwise great magazine. I know most of the above games were reviewed in your mag, but many others seem to quietly get released with no information or reviews. Even the last *LEGO Indiana Jones* game failed to get reviewed (as far as I'm aware). Other games, like *Cars Race-O-Rama* and *Madagascar Kartz*, I'm not even sure if they have an Australia release, as I've seen nothing about them anywhere.

Some of these games can even be quite fun for adults. I have to admit I'm sneakily working my way through *Monsters vs Aliens* while my son is not around, as it's a great way to up your trophy count!!

Now I know the magazine is aimed at an older audience, but I'm sure I'm not the only gamer out there with children? Even a small round up every now and then would be great.

Keep up the great work.  
**Leon Harris, via email**

## SPEAK TO US!

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games - on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

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PO Box 1037  
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If you're on Facebook and you read the mag (which you're doing *right now*), join our fan page for exclusive competitions, breaking news and intelligent banter with other gamers, fans and the guys who make this award-winning publication. Search for *Official PlayStation Magazine - Australia*, or go to [tinyurl.com/OPSAus](http://tinyurl.com/OPSAus), and get involved!

## STOREFRONT

We play the games so you can pick the cream from the crock. What deliciousness have you bought lately?



Tiny Tim  
MAG

"Something insanely gratifying about smashing 126 yanks at a time..."



Alana Brennan  
Rainbow Six Vegas 2

"Because my husband and I have two loves, avoiding the in-laws and killing terrorists at the monorail station."



Simon Wallace  
Sonic and Sega All-stars Racing

"It's a really fun game. Better when you have your friends around."



Tye Johnstone  
Final Fantasy XIII

"I know it was worth paying extra for the special edition game and guide."

## CAPTION THIS!

We have the screen, and all your captions are belong to us. Well, one, anyway. Congrats to **Matthew John Francis**! Check out Facebook on Fridays for your chance to win!



"That's great! Well clearly two of us are going to have to change!"



The games that 'sneak' by us

Cheers Leon - it's certainly a valid question. Yes, *OPS* is aimed at an older audience - the average age of our reader is a lot closer to the average age of gamers in general. However, the main reason we don't regularly review kids titles is that they're often not made available to us. They don't appear to be a priority to publishers because good review, poor review, no review: they sell regardless. In print we have what we call a lead-time - that's the length of time between when we send our completed magazine to press and when it goes on sale. We need to be provided with games well in advance to ensure our reviews hit the shelves at around the same time the game does. We generally don't see most kids titles until they're already available in retail, which would generally mean readers wouldn't see a review until up to six weeks after the game was released.



Why does it always rain on us?

## NEGATIVE VIBES

Hey guys, I just noticed that while reading your latest issue, it kinda felt lacking. Also, the movie reviews I felt had a very bad tone. Like, do you guys hate all movies or was the people/person reviewing them just really pissed off at the time of writing them? I mean, gosh. The *Heavy Rain* review also felt a touch negative, you guys gave it an 8, but you also went on about other reviewers for at least a couple of paragraphs. I just don't think that's the sort of way to review a bronze award. That's just my little bit of constructive criticism, otherwise I love the mag, it's awesome. I wanna try and be a lead programmer later in life.

Devin Wilson, via email

Thanks for the feedback Devin. We have to call you on the *Heavy Rain* criticism though. The review was a touch negative because we felt it was necessary to point out that we don't agree *Heavy Rain* is a revolution. When you say "went on about other reviewers for at least a couple of paragraphs" do you mean the line, "Stop trying to convince us Quantic Dream just invented fire while everybody else is still

rubbing two sticks together"? Because that was one sentence. Hardly a couple of paragraphs.

## EXTRA EXTRA

Hey guys, been loving the mag for a while now, I'm about to get another subscription. I have been wondering about your thoughts on in-game extras, with a pre-order or special edition. I would have loved to have played through *Dante's Inferno* with the *Dead Space* suit on, or played 'Extraction' online in *Army of Two: The 40th Day*, but I wasn't willing to fork out the extra cash for them. I really did not think it was worth it. I don't mind the idea of them giving out figurines, soundtracks and night vision goggles for the extra cost. Surely the in-game content should be unlocked for completing tasks while playing the game.

There doesn't seem to be any shortage of this happening with *Just Cause 2*, *God of War III* and *Red Dead Redemption* all getting in-game extras for a pre-order or special edition.

Anyway was just hoping to get your thoughts on this, keep up the great work with the mag.

Dave Wark, via email

You bring up a great point Dave. Less than 10 years ago all this kind of stuff existed in games for people to unlock, either via playing it well or thanks to cheats. Unfortunately for gamers, gaming is still a business. And like any business, it's in the business of making money. It's important for videogame publishers to drive pre-orders and new game sales because it makes their shareholders money. Sucks for us, but money makes the world go around.



Still not here

## MATHS MAN

Kazunori Yamauchi is quoted as saying, "The PS3 hardware has a very peak performance. The better you manipulate it, the better it performs" and confessed the game *Gran Turismo 5* uses 80% of the PS3's power.

This is, in fact, incorrect, *GT5* uses 0% of the PS3's power because IT STILL HASN'T BEEN RELEASED YET.

What a tool.

I guess that Q1 release date is just slipping away isn't it?

James Coates, via email

We admire your passion, but your maths is off. *GT5* currently uses 0% of YOUR PS3's power (and ours) but we'd say it uses 80% of all the ones over at Polyphony Digital. We wouldn't call Yamauchi a tool. Perfectionist, maybe.



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Full of explosive action and starring Jason Basteman, Ben Affleck and Andy Garcia, *Smokin' Aces* is the story of a Las Vegas magician turned informant who has a price on his head courtesy of a Mafia boss. It doesn't take long before the word of the bounty reaches bounty hunters, thugs and mobsters who all want a cut of the cash. Cue the violence as they all descend on Las Vegas after the same man.

The sequel, *Assassins' Ball*, stars Vinnie Jones as an assassin hunting for an average FBI office worker, Walter Weed. He's not the only one on Weed's case, and more killers show up with elaborate ways of capping their target.

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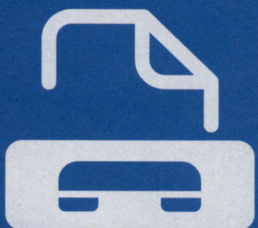




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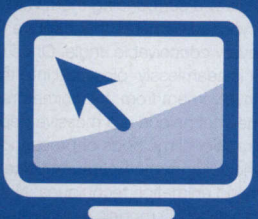
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# INCOMING

“It really is like stepping into a time machine”

## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | EXPECTED RELEASE: LATE 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR  
DEVELOPER: TEAM BONDI | PLAYERS: 1

# L.A. NOIRE

I didn't do nothin', copper. Myah, see?

Typos are the bane of our existence. Sometimes they work out to be funny – like the time we accidentally switched the letter 'l' for the letter 'r' in 'wholesome' – but most of the time they're just cringe-worthy mistakes preserved for the ages. The most embarrassing typo available is the misspelling of your very own name – and there have been "anonymous insider allegations" suggesting *L.A. Noire* has done that very thing. The rumour runs thusly: 'L.A. Noir' was originally announced to the world incorrectly, thanks to a programmer mistakenly tacking an 'e' onto the end. After thorough investigation we're inclined to think that the story is nothing more than an interweb myth. However, that potential murder of the English language did prove to be a fascinating mystery that got our detective juices flowing.

Which, of course, leads us to our utterly seamless segue; the murder mysteries in *L.A. Noire* are set to squeeze out the detective in all

of us. On the surface the game looks like your typical sandbox adventure that plays like *GTA*, but Team Bondi is aiming to shift the focus away from gats and car chases and more on the detective work elements of solving a crime. For example, when you amble into a crime scene you won't just have a big neon chevron pointing to your definitive clue. Rather you will find a host of specific clues that need to be investigated in various ways in order to piece together a puzzle and to pinpoint your next suspect.

Once you do catch up with your mark, it's time to get your interrogation on; and this will mean the delicate art of reading people's expressions. Every single movement of an NPC's face and the emotion in their voices is accurately recreated which allows the more perceptive among us to register what professional poker players call 'tells'. A tell is a physical manifestation of an emotion and they can indicate if the suspect is angry, being truthful, telling porky pies, or are just plain ol'

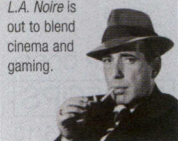
crapping themselves because there is a human head stashed in the fridge behind you.

Why haven't we seen this awesome mechanic in a game before now? Brutally honest answer: facial animation in videogames simply hasn't had the balls to handle it. Team Bondi has made a technological advancement with a new facial capture system that accurately reproduces the faces of over 300 live actors acting out a script that is 10 times longer than any feature film. The results are simply astonishing in motion, with perfect lip-synch, eyes that radiate intelligence and nuanced expressions that make even the ludicrously detailed models in *Heavy Rain* look like glorified mannequins (who shower too much).

The process involves taking a real-life actor or actress sporting professional make-up and hair and surrounding them with 32 stereo-synched cameras that capture their head from every conceivable angle. Once the performance it is seamlessly pipelined into the game with no involvement from any animators. Team Bondi's new technique is a massive departure from the traditional methods of procuring a digital actor; including motion-capture, voice recording and hand animation techniques. Not only are the resulting 3D models it generates uncannily life-like, but it speeds up the process of creation. One minute of facial animation usually takes a team of animators a month. Team Bondi can produce 20 minutes in a day. Clearly the plot in this game is going to be epic.

## THE PITCH

Set in a perfectly recreated Los Angeles backdrop of corruption, drugs and jazz, *L.A. Noire* is out to blend cinema and gaming.







**40 GHOST RECON FUTURE SOLDIER**  
Ubisoft takes war back to the future



**42 FIFA WORLD CUP 2010**  
The year's biggest event, in your home!



**43 BLUR**  
It's Need for Speed crossed with Crash Team Racing, but is it any good?



**44 MAFIA II**  
The crime epic looking to usurp GTA from its lofty throne!



"Oh, do I like sax? Um, yeah, I guess I like sax too"



"No, I will not take off this hat. And there's not a darn thing you can do about it"

But that's not all. The same artistic attention that is being lavished upon the characters is being spent on the wider world of *L.A. Noire*. The game is set in 1940s Los Angeles and, thanks to the near-obsessive level of detail the Rockstar brand is widely renowned for, it really is like stepping into a time machine. Using hand-drawn council maps and over 180,000 period photographs from newspapers published in that era, the city is quite unlike the contemporary LA some of us stop-over at. The iconic Los Angelian Freeways are completely absent, for instance.

While the overworld of the game is touted to be the biggest 'Rockstar city' ever made, Team Bondi is also dedicated to filling it full of interesting places to check out. Playing into the aforementioned idea of detective exploration there will be over 140 interior environments to snoop through too. These areas seem to be jam-packed with minor details that lead to major discoveries. You might notice a blood stain that trails to that old murder-weapon favourite: a pipe, or the unidentified victim's wallet could be hastily hidden somewhere, just begging to be rifled through.

Which isn't to say you won't be causing

some chalk-outlines of your own. Downtown was the true centre of 1940s Los Angeles and it was a lively, densely populated, exciting and sometimes dangerous place. Team Bondi has promised us our fair share of car races, foot chases and sweet, sweet shoot-out action. Details as to whether the gunplay will follow a euphoria-driven *GTA IV* feel, or the faster-paced *Red Dead Redemption* style is unknown to us at this stage. As soon as we know, you'll know.

Even not knowing that, it's difficult not to get psyched for *L.A. Noire*. Those among you who are looking for a more cerebral sandbox experience with a protagonist that isn't morally corrupt may well have their prayers answered. Featuring jaw-dropping new facial tech, a cast of hundreds, and an über-cool time period Team Bondi is onto something amazing here and are to be commended for keeping it all off the radar for so long. Now that it is out in the open, we simply can't hear enough about it. Also, the fact that it is being developed using amazing industry pioneering techniques right here in our homeland is enough to make us feel positively patriotic. Keep two eyes afixed on this one, folks. It's gonna rock you.

— Adam Mathewe

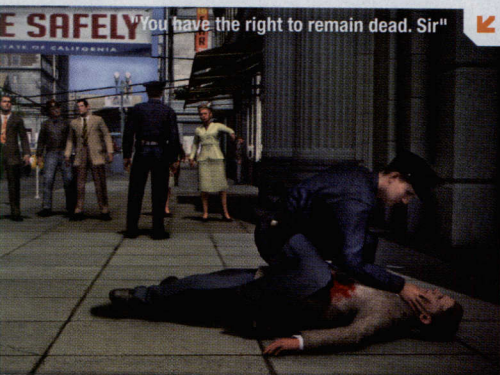
The period detail is captivating



"There's blood on the wall and it's dark. Let's split up"



"Oh, it's all in here too. Oh, we are going to have ants!"



"You have the right to remain dead. Sir"



"Hat. Check. Machine gun? Check"



## THEY SAY

"*L.A. Noire* blends action, detection and complex storytelling and draws players into an open-ended challenge"

## WE SAY

Unfortunately for you guys our pages don't animate. If you could see these incredibly lifelike 3D faces in action you'd spit out your coffee all over the magazine

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
			✗		





**INCOMING**

### JUMP IN

That scaffolding around the Ghost's feet is part of his exoskeleton, an external structure that intensifies their physical attributes. So as well as being elite soldiers who sneak in and out before you've had chance to scratch your backside, they can also run, jump, slide and beat the crap out of an enemy with more intensity than anyone else.

### THE PITCH

Squad-based shooting action with more freedom and a back-mounted rocket launcher.



### INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** SHOOTER | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** TBA  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT | **DEVELOPER:** UBISOFT PARIS | **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA

# GHOST RECON: FUTURE SOLDIER

He even has a hoverboard

### WHAT'S GOING ON?

Set in the near future, some sneaky Russian faction stages a coup d'état and then invade Nordic countries for their oil. Rather than risking a serious global conflict, the US decide to send in the Ghosts to take care of the Ruskies.

Enter: you.

### WITHOUT A TRACE

No, these guys don't have digital scurvy, but they do have optical camo, a technology that's actually being developed so that the wearer can disappear. The environment around you is filmed then projected onto the opposite side of your body; perfect for sneaking up on chumps either from long range or to take them out up-close.



## DRONE TO KILL

Although there are vehicles in game, you won't be driving. The focus is well and truly on shooting while your teammate drives. These drones and other pieces of high tech military equipment are inspired by prototypes the American Army is developing for its Future Soldier 2030 program.

## GO GO GADGET

Your soldiers are loaded up with more tech than a Japanese superstore. The cross-com (that blue eyepiece that gives you the viewpoint of drone, tank and so on) returns, but you also have a mortar on your back. When you link up to your teammates, you'll be able to fire four rockets at a target simultaneously.

## LET IT SNOW

Sometimes you'll need to take a break from being a bad-arse. At various points you'll be someone completely different, but also affected by the Russian forces. You might be a bodyguard protecting the Russian President, or an ordinary bloke fighting to save friends and family. It should serve to flesh out the story more.

## THEY SAY

"You are an F-16 on legs, trained to lock on to your objective even in the world's most complex, high-risk warzones"

## WE SAY

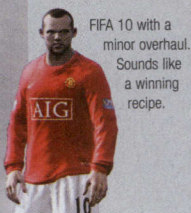
Ubisoft is promising a more flexible squad-based mechanic, but we're most excited by the back-mounted mortar. Most original weapon ever?

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
			X		





## THE PITCH



FIFA 10 with a minor overhaul. Sounds like a winning recipe.

## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** SPORT | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** MAY 2010 | **DISTRIBUTOR:** EA  
**DEVELOPER:** EA SPORTS | **PLAYERS:** 1-20

# FIFA WORLD CUP 2010

Time to raise the green and gold

It's a tricky position EA are in here. To the casual observer it looks like EA have rebranded their football juggernaut, FIFA 10, slapped in a few new modes and whacked it on the shelves to cash in on one of the biggest sporting events of the last four years. You'd be right to ask yourself why should you pay for the same game with a few bits here and there, and why this wasn't released as DLC. Well, good try at asking yourself questions, as the changes are more skin deep.

The tone of *World Cup* is quite different to its solid cousin, being more about the excitement of playing in front of tens of thousands of people, and the atmosphere that you'd feel being out on the pitch. Much of the improvements to the visual aspect that add to the vibe are incidental. Once you're in South Africa and on the green, you'll see flags being waived for the spectator's favourite nations, confetti on the pitch, flashes from cameras out in the stands and so on. Perform well and the crowd will cheer. Fudge it and they'll have their heads in their hands.

Teams have more of a presence as they're physically (virtually) on the bench rather than being mysteriously absent. Lighting's improved, too, adding a layer of polish to the whole thing, and player likenesses have been reworked from last year's release. What you can take away from this is that *World Cup* is pushing FIFA further and further towards broadcast quality. We're big fans of small touches that increase the atmosphere of a game and what we've seen so far looks just right.

With your controller in hand, it feels different. Players' momentum has been improved, so lofting a ball to a player means he'll run onto it rather than having to position them in the right direction to keep things moving. Chest and shoulder passes have been implemented, and you can now take a ball on your chest and move with it immediately, rather than having to wait 'til

it hits the ground and go from there. Thankfully, the keeper's been reigned in, so those cheeky chips you did over the goalie's head last year aren't going to wash now.

Online's improved. As you hit the final tournament you'll always be paired up against a human player, and after picking your team you're then into the group matches with the aim to make the top two. From there, you're only a few wins away from earning the greatest football trophy of them all. The pressure should be immense.

EA knows that *FIFA 10* is a totally solid game though there's room for improvement. With *FIFA World Cup 2010*, EA is well on the way to making the next *FIFA* even more refined; you can expect to see the more successful elements of this implemented later on this year.

Paul Taylor



Pictured: cheats



No more cheeky chips



## THEY SAY

"It will feature all the emotion and passion of the fiercest national rivalries battling on the world's biggest stage"

## WE SAY

Nailing the atmosphere and presenting a change that's more than skin deep is a challenge that EA is well on the way to conquering.

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
			⊗		





## THE PITCH

It's *Wipeout* meets *Mario Kart*. But it's also *Need For Speed Underground* meets *Modern Warfare 2*.



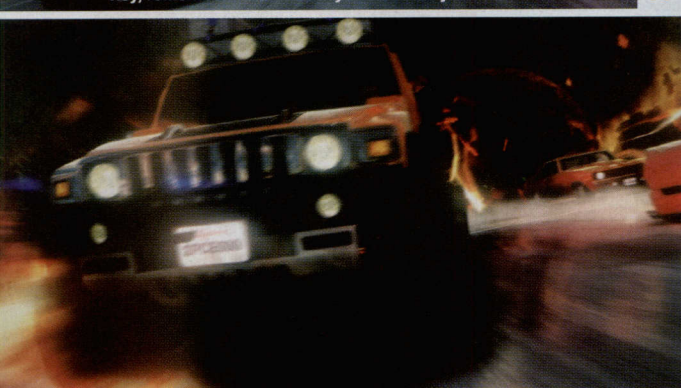
## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RACING | EXPECTED RELEASE: MAY 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION | DEVELOPER: BIZARRE CREATIONS | PLAYERS: 1-20

We're not sure what this symbol means. Free hugs, possibly



Hey, remember *Ford vs Chevy*? Of course you don't. Who would?



Our magazine has a picture of a Hummer in it, and that's okay

## BLUR

The street's like a jungle of neon

We were told that this wouldn't be a 'racer's racing game' by an Activision PR rep, which is weird. It has a stack of real-world cars to covet, including a Ford GT, Audi TT, VW Scirocco, Lotus Exige and an extremely hot Megane hatch. The tracks are based on real world locations, from the cities of Tokyo and Barcelona to the industrial badlands of LA. But then there's the powerups: floating neon squares placed along the track that allow your motor to shoot balls of energy that will skittle other cars, or even burst ahead with a nitro boost. *Gran Turismo* this ain't, and nor should it be.

Once you're over the fact that your cars aren't pimped to look like they'd cause Bond levels of destruction and you just accept that they can do the things they do, it's a lot of fun. We played the online multiplayer with access to a limited number of cars, tracks and modes, though the entire arsenal was on offer. The comparison to *Wipeout* is apt as we tossed mines, shot homing- and dumb-missiles and unleashed nitro with a shield equipped, though there are a couple of originals (well, borrowed from *Mario Kart*) too, like the Barge which acts as short-range shockwave, and a lightning strike geared for those lagging at the back of the pack. It's also possible to either evade incoming attacks or cancel them out with a missile or shockwave.

The ability-enhancing weapons make the experience, as the cars themselves feel pretty similar. Characterised by grip, speed, acceleration and health, and split up into a number of classes, there's not much difference between the front-wheel drive machines at the lower end of the scale in C and D class. Their rear-wheel drive brethren do kick out their tail more easily, but we definitely have our favourites.

Your antics on track earn fans – from the basic stuff like drifting to chaining together or

cancelling attacks – which in multiplayer acts purely as XP in order to level up, unlocking more cars and tournaments. Cleverly, you can mod your car with behavioural perks, much like *Modern Warfare 2*: give yourself a bit more grunt when you're physically ramming other cars, convert a devastating blow into a usable powerup, or gain more fan for performing flashy moves. Like the shooter, there are only certain combinations of perks that can be allowed, so you can't totally rort the XP system.

We're not totally sold on *Blur* yet. It looks pretty, has bad-arse *Transformers*-like sound effects and the right attitude, but the racing itself didn't immediately grab us. If it weren't for the weapons it would be a sub-par racer, but it does a convincing job of increasing your heart rate when there are stacks of neon balls of lighting screaming towards your rear-view mirror. **A Paul Taylor**

## THEY SAY

"Drivers careen through real-world track locations packed with fast curves, sneaky alternate routes and hair-raising jumps"

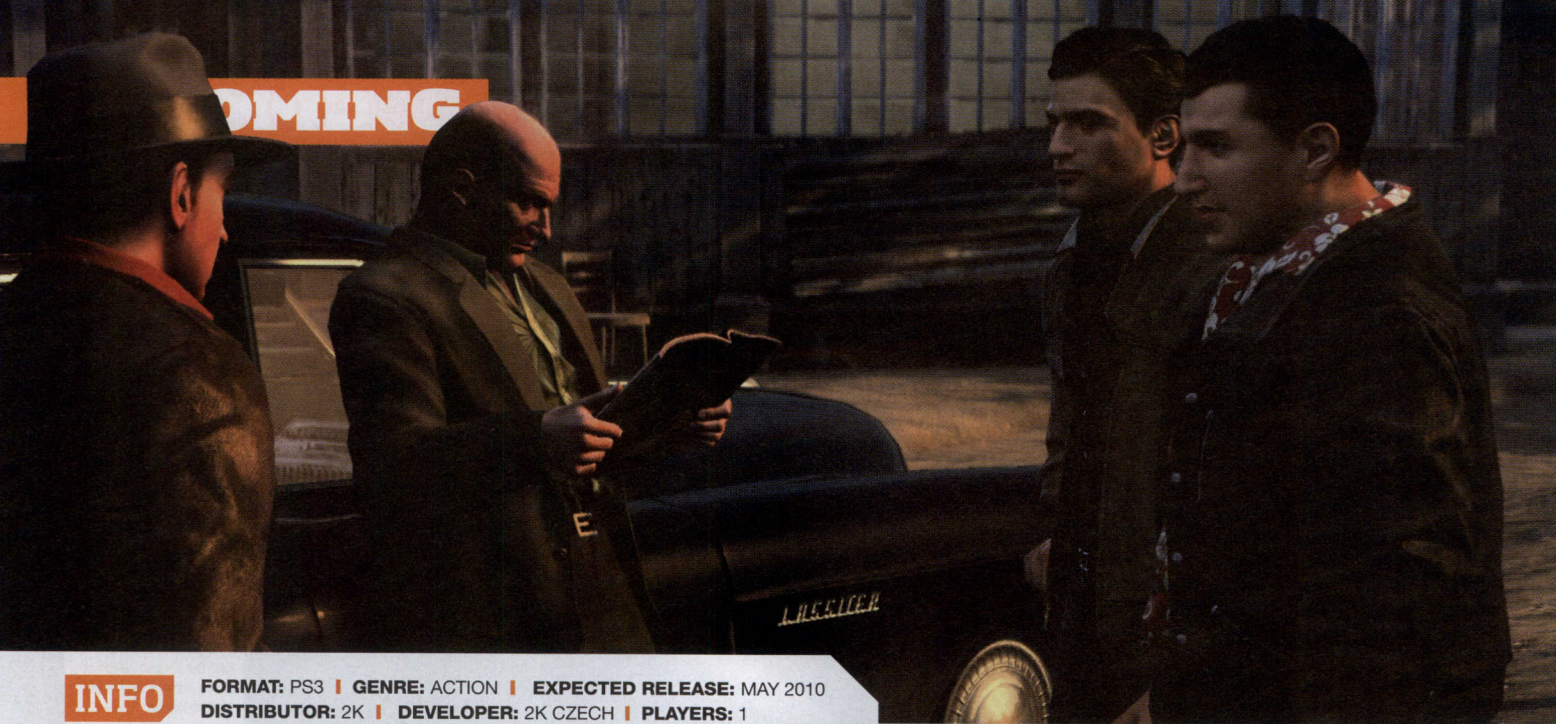
## WE SAY

The opportunity's there for fast, brutal racing, and it will reward the skilled sharpshooters who plan their moves a lap ahead. We just want more solid racing.

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
		X			



# COMING



## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** ACTION | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** MAY 2010  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** 2K | **DEVELOPER:** 2K CZECH | **PLAYERS:** 1

# MAFIA II

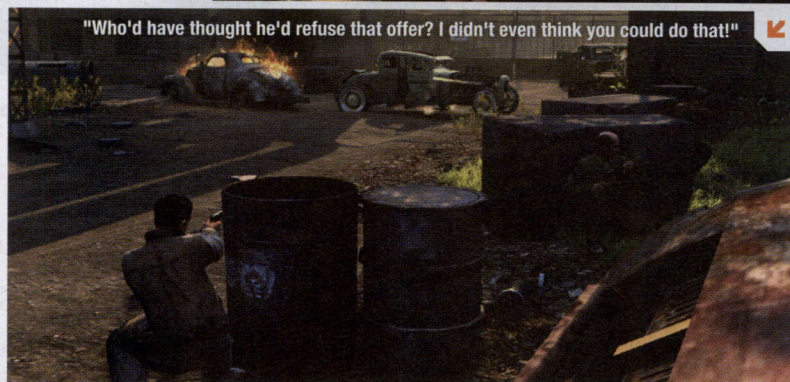
## Guns, babes and cigarettes

To say *Mafia II* is another open-world game is like saying *Uncharted 2* is just another action title. While there are actions and themes common to it and the genre benchmark *GTA IV*, the post-WWII setting sets them apart without being a gimmick. It looks good, sounds great and feels as slick as smooth-talking wise guy.

Its world, Empire Bay, is a thriving city loosely modelled on a combination of New York, Chicago and other US metropolises. It's the world that Vito and his life-long friend Joe inhabit. Starting out in an apartment, Vito dresses, picking from a selection of casual clothes or a suit and tie before meeting Joe at a truck filled with cigarettes that he's selling for \$2 a carton. It's not long before an opposing gang, the greasers, show up. After setting fire to the truck one of the greasers winds up dead thanks to Joe's short fuse, and the duo have to check in with their boss to explain the torched merchandise – and see what can be done about the greasers.

As we're on the phone, being chewed out, our badly parked car is the catalyst for a rough traffic jam. People are being impatient, and half way into our phone call we can barely hear what's going on as horns are honking. Phone down, we turn around and see the conga line of cars queued up behind our own. Whoops.

From there Vito and Joe, along with a more experienced and heavily-armed crew are set to destroy the greaser's hideout. Half-a-dozen guys line up in front of the wooden shack and let loose with whatever firepower they have. We go at it with a Tommy gun, and while the destruction isn't completely dynamic it has some neat touches, like the sign that kept



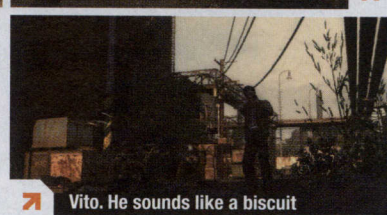
"Who'd have thought he'd refuse that offer? I didn't even think you could do that!"



"Merry Christmas, ya filthy animal"



Made man makes mess



Vito. He sounds like a biscuit

spinning on a taut line of wire as we shoot it, and bits of glass tumbling down. Finishing the job off with a Molotov cocktail we jump into the car and make our way to the foundry to sort these blokes out.

The guy at the foundry gate is surprised to see us, and even more surprised when one of the crew redecorates his face with a baseball bat. Unsurprisingly, it turns into a shoot out though some of the greasers, stunned by what happened at the gate, are running away but looking over their shoulders to see what's going on. As we dash between cover (activated by a button press) and take aim, we're completely absorbed.

Its story is sharp, the voice acting's ace and the gunplay balanced. There's still some work to be done to make it look a bit prettier, but this is making big blips on our radar. **Paul Taylor**

## THE PITCH

GTA meets *Godfather*. But not *Part III*, that was rubbish – and a decade too late.



## OFF THE RACK

Every action game needs collectibles. *GTA* has had hidden packages and pigeons, *Uncharted* has treasures, *Mafia II* has *Playboy* magazines. Scattered throughout the world are some of the earliest copies of the men's mag, and as you pick them up you're treated to a photo of a model or a cover. There are more than 50 to collect, which is jugs fantastic.

## THEY SAY

"It features a deep and compelling narrative that is embellished with a sophisticated, era-evoking atmosphere"

## WE SAY

It has the right attitude and is absolutely nailing the atmosphere. Cruising the streets in a 1950s tank of a car, listening to blues while outrunning the cops is magic.

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
			✗		



“Naughty’s done toying with Chubby and **finishes him off with an axe to the crotch**”

## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | EXPECTED RELEASE: JUNE 2010  
DISTRIBUTOR: AIE | DEVELOPER: ARTIFICIAL MIND & MOVEMENT | PLAYERS: 1-4

# NAUGHTY BEAR

Grin and bear it

The developer says that Naughty Bear isn't evil, he's "just a little bit pissed off". We disagree. He's like a cross between Eric Cartman and Stalin, but with the feel-good familiarity of your favourite childhood stuffed animal. Who likes to burn, beat and boo other bears to death in his world.

Set on Paradise Island where primary colours abound, Naughty Bear sulks. He's massively unpopular and very scruffy, and all he wants is to be someone's friend. The other bears, though, have very different ideas. In one level, a bear called Chubby is running for election and promises to have Naughty killed if he's elected. Clearly this ain't right, so with the prompting of the narrator Naughty sets out to ensure his survival.

Paradise Island is an open world, with primary and secondary goals to achieve throughout each scenario. So, while the aim here is to kill Chubby (although all the bears you bludgeon to death are 're-stuffed' so you see familiar characters wandering around the island on your journey of destruction) you also have to terrorise the other inhabitants to stop them from coming after you. At your disposal are your weapons, environmental objects and stealth, and kicking seven shades out of a foe in public

means more points. More points mean new costumes, and more abilities.

We saw Naughty trash a BBQ, smashing objects and using the flames to set another bear on fire. Once a bear's weakened and hobbling back to safety, the others will see and become more terrified. You're also able to hide in the bushes, leap out and yell 'boo!', so psychology plays a part. Scare an enemy enough and he might turn the service revolver he has on himself to escape the torment.

Chubby, meanwhile, has backup: ninjas. Dressed in black with an eye mask, these special forces move quickly and will spot Naughty hiding in the undergrowth. They aren't immune to physical violence though, so if you're swift enough you can finish them off. Naughty's done toying with Chubby and finishes him off with an axe to the crotch.

Scattered around levels are interactive environment elements. As well as the lit BBQ that can be used to set bears on fire, there are crates and boxes with lids. Wedge an unfortunate between the lid and the object and you can go to town on the back of his fluffy skull and neck. Score a kill in a clever way and



## THE PITCH

Grand Theft Auto meets *The Punisher*, with bear traps.



the narrator will gleefully yell out the name of the fatality as bears close by squeal for their life.

It looks pretty, and we're hopeful the world's big enough and packed with different scenarios to prevent the decimation becoming repetitive. More soon. **Paul Taylor**

## THEY SAY

"Naughty Bear lets you scare the stuffing out of your victims before you impale them on your machete"

## WE SAY

Sadistic, warped revenge wrapped up in bright colours. Naughty Bear could give Frank Castle nightmares. Cute and cuddly? Not a chance!

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
			✗		

"This is Shooter's tour!"





“The game is running as close to a Formula 1 car whilst still being as enjoyable as possible”

## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** RACING | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** SEPTEMBER 2010  
**DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | **DEVELOPER:** CODEMASTERS | **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA

## F1 2010

Making simulation fun again

Since the first PlayStation-only *Formula 1* game way back in September 2006 on the PSone, there's been an *F1* game on your PlayStation every year until 2008 – the same year that Codemasters signed the license after taking over from series stalwarts Studio Liverpool (aka Psygnosis). Realising that they couldn't, in their own words, get the “all singing, all dancing” *F1* game out in 12 months, they decided to make the game over two years in order to get things right.

Skipping a year's iteration of a sports game is like *OPS* taking a month off – we're struggling to think of a time when *FIFA*, *PES* or *Madden* took a year out for R&R – though how much you care about it bunking off comes back to the sport's popularity and a country's involvement and success. Case in point, Mark Webber.

This is the first ‘true’ next-gen Formula One game. *Championship Edition* was a dolled-up version of the PS2's *F1 '06*, while the Wii version on the shelves last year was, well, the Wii version. This is the first time, proper, that the Codies have taken the reins to make an *F1* game – and it's a bold concept with progressive ideas, tapping more into the ‘behind the scenes’ aspect.

Much like the Formula 1 organisation itself, the game is going through some changes compared to previous versions – a lot of it regarding the image of Formula 1, but also improvements to the core gameplay. One

massive inclusion is the chance to live the life of a Formula 1 driver in the game's career mode. Rather than taking the role of Schumacher, Webber or Button, in a normal slog across a dozen or so tracks, you'll start out as a team's second driver – as yourself.

As well as racing on the 19 circuits over a full year, you'll have to manage the lifestyle aspect; dealing with the press, talking to your agent and so on. Codies' rationale is that Formula 1 is as much about the glamour as it is the racing, so you'll be exploring the paddock where so much of the behind-the-scenes action occurs, and you'll see other drivers doing the same, as opposed to being

static icons on a menu screen or in their cars. How far this goes, we're not sure. We doubt that you'll be able to rub shoulders with Tiger Woods and Roger Federer in a photoshoot for a men's shaving product.

When we visited Codemasters HQ in February this year, we didn't get to see inside the virtual paddock area as it was still being built. We did, however, get to play the game though the code was still reasonably early. So early, in fact, that the team had used 2009 model cars instead of the 2010 versions, simply because they didn't have the final designs yet. Despite this placeholder art (as you can see in the images here), the cars were on the track, showing off the new driving model powered by the EGO engine (see boxout).

Given extraordinary access to the teams, the Codies was absorbed in the intricacies of the stuff a bloke on the street probably wouldn't consider. Like, for instance, how tyres degrade and their ideal working temperatures, the way they work at those temperatures, the differences between the compounds and how

## THE PITCH

Formula 1, plus the lifestyle aspect of *DIRT 2* minus the extreme BS. We hope.





## SAFETY LAST

Although their plans are to make the game as authentic as possible, there is one concession: no safety cars. It was in their wish list, but it failed the fun test. Being stuck behind a safety car that's doing 110km/h means a lap that normally takes 90 seconds is instead taking four minutes. Boring? Definitely. However, if people want it, it might make its way into *F1 2011*.

Pictured: Webber, not in first place

## NOT A DIRTY WORD

It was used in *GRID*, *DIRT*, *Operation Flashpoint* and also in *F1 2010*. The EGO engine is developed in Codemasters' Central Technology Unit; they make the tools, and ensure it evolves every time it's used. EGO's evolved so much it's now called a Technology Platform inhouse, as there are so many ways it can be used. One Codemasters spokesperson told us, "It's like a box of toys we can get out and play with; different things for different uses. The long-term plan is to have it across multiple platforms and multiple genres. It will be a core technology running throughout Codemasters internal titles in the future." So far, it's working well.

Drift as close to the cones to... wait, wrong game

Pictured: bugging up

much water a wet tyre displaces compared to an intermediate tyre. Intense stuff, and that's just one part of a complex machine.

This is the kind of data real-world teams put into their simulators, so the game is running as close to a Formula 1 car whilst still being as enjoyable as possible. If it was *exactly* like a Formula 1 car and you could drive it you wouldn't be reading this magazine, you'd be preparing yourself for the Shanghai Grand Prix. Don't expect to be bogged down in a labyrinth of menus, tweaking things (unless that's the way you like to spend your playtime). Your race engineer will be able to tune your car after testing; expect options like 'more aggressive', 'smoother' and so on.

The engineer also plays a part in the race itself. The weather changes dynamically, so as the wet stuff start to come down in a dry race he'll be on the radio asking if you want to pit and change. This is where your strategy has to be as sharp as your driving. Because the track picks up the rubber from your tyres over the course of testing, qualifying and racing, the rain will wash it away and make the track more slippery. However, as your opponents drive on

the soaked racing line, they'll dry it out. Water sprays spectacularly behind cars, and the track is divided into 30 square centimetre blocks, so you'll see pools of water in certain places rather than across the entire width of the tarmac.

So, do you stay as you are and follow your opponent like a bloodhound on the scent or change and play it safe? Come off the track and you can expect your multi-million dollar machine to spectacularly fall apart. Carbon fibre doesn't crumple so much as shatter and we left bits of our machine all over Monza.

Duck into the pits and it'll be a hive of activity. The pit crew's fully animated, and so are the other teams'. If you stop short the team is going to have to push you forward to jack the car up. Stop just over the line and you'll see the bloke nearest to your front spoiler jump back, costing you valuable seconds in the pits.

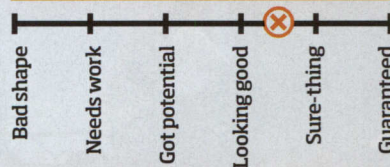
We want to play more of *F1 2010*. The concept is thrilling and promises a comprehensive experience of being a Formula 1 driver, plus it has the tech and a tonne of research behind it to make it one of the most exciting driving games to date. Let's hope it takes the chequered flag. **Paul Taylor**

## THEY SAY

"Gamers will take on the full, expanded grid in a variety of game modes including an extensive, innovative career mode"

## WE SAY

It has the modes and the research behind it, and depending on how the career mode turns out this could be a racing experience unlike anything else you've ever played.





## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: SPORTS | EXPECTED RELEASE: MAY | DISTRIBUTOR: EA  
DEVELOPER: EA BLACK BOX | PLAYERS: 1-6

# SKATE 3

Dude, you're the wind beneath my wheels

## THE PITCH

It's that winning *Skate* formula with a new city, difficulty levels and an emphasis on 'rollin' with the homies'.



With the *Tony Hawk* franchise curled up in the foetal position thanks to it's latest bail, it certainly looks as though *Skate* has got the skate park cornered. But rather than feeling jubilant on EA Black Box's behalf, we are in fact a tad worried. The Chinese have a saying: the self-satisfied go no further. This nugget of wisdom aptly explains why rival-less game franchises can nose-dive in quality (and also the correlation between the rise of Internet porn and the epic decrease in registered marriages).

Fortunately for us, EA Black Box have plans to change some fundamentals of how skating in the park should operate. First rule off the block; nobody skates alone. Tapping into the idea that real-life skating is a sport comprised of tricks learned from the dudes down at your local spot, the single and multiplayer in *Skate 3* is going to promote a similar fellowship.

Whether you're online or off, you'll be a part of a team. Thusly ensconced with your homies you can take your squad off to compete in competitions against rival teams, create your own parks, or even grow your own skate company. The existing multiplayer options will

be present, along with three new game modes: '1-Up', 'Domination', and 'Own The Lot'. In 1-Up you have a given number of seconds to get a point total as a team and then the other team has to beat - or '1-Up' - that score. In Domination the teams are going against each other trying to own as many spots as they can in a time limit. In Own The Lot there will be six to twelve things to accomplish in a certain area that need to be completed by your team first to win. For example; you may need to grind a certain surface, hit a certain gap, hippie jump a bench, et cetera. Only a team that can quickly organise its members into completing these set tasks can hope to prevail.

If you don't have a corporate agenda or adversarial you can of course just hook up with five of your buddies and go bombing around town, nailing tricks and laughing your arse off when somebody ragdolls over a bench and into the path of an oncoming truck. You know, just like you would in real life.

Also boasting a very robust Skate Park Creator and a whole new city to explore, *Skate 3* is poised to underflip over our expectations and Darkslide the franchise back into our affections once again. **Adam Mathew**

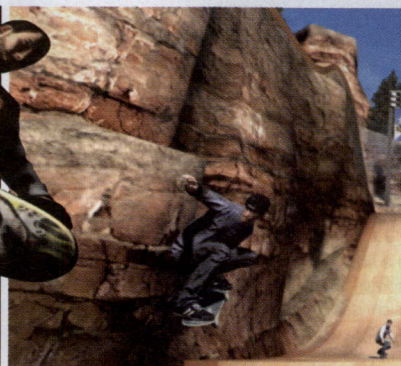


We can only predict this is going to end badly

This game is going to bowl you over



That ship to the left? That's the Dong Mei Line. Just saying



Forecast: sun with a chance of skaters

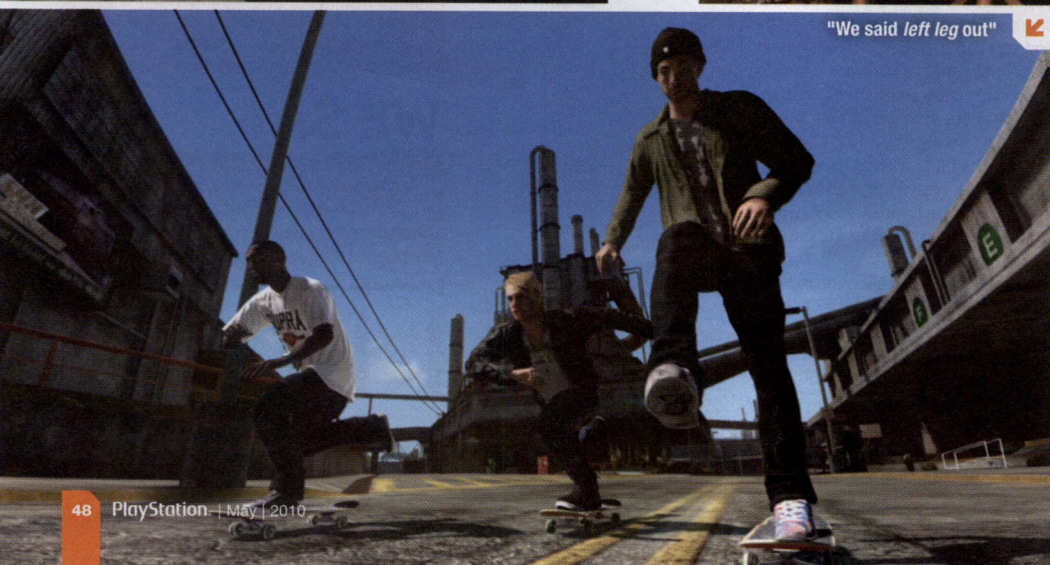
## THEY SAY

"*Skate 3* breaks new ground by letting gamers build their ultimate skate team to take on new challenges"

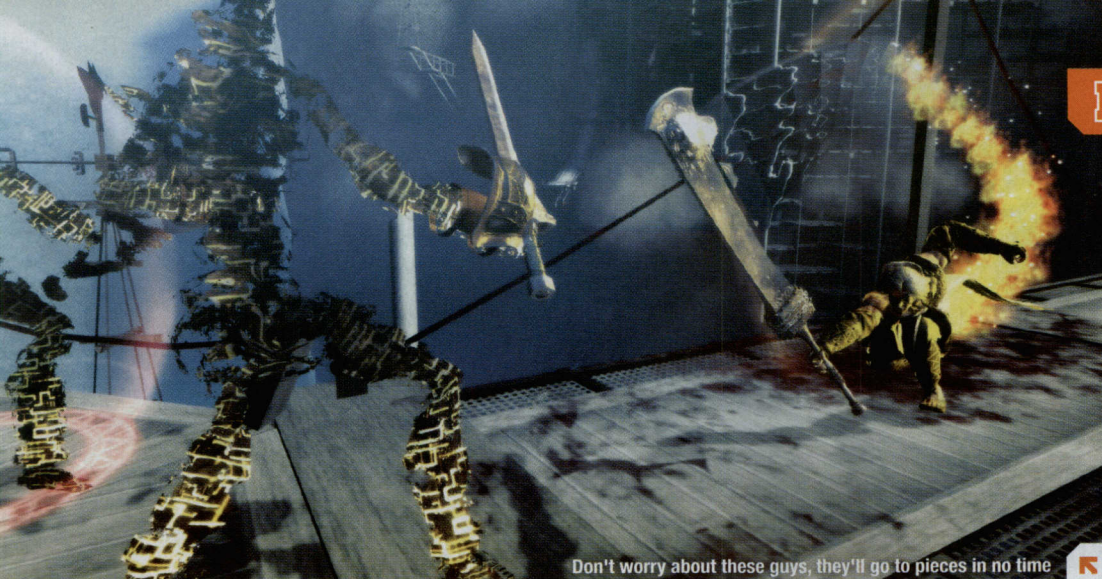
## WE SAY

Tribalism rules. We can't wait to start our own roving pack of skate bandits. We'll do it all, man; skitch behind cop cars, hassle shopkeepers and generally just skate.

Bad shape	Needs work	Got potential	Looking good	Sure-thing	Guaranteed
				✗	







Don't worry about these guys, they'll go to pieces in no time

## INCOMING

▶ "Who's that? I can't see through my fringe"



### INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** JRPG | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** APRIL 2010 | **DISTRIBUTOR:** UBISOFT | **DEVELOPER:** CAVIA | **PLAYERS:** 1

# NIER

So there

### THE PITCH

*The Road* meets a real-time RPG and with no girly-men. We hope.



There's little doubt that Square Enix have a firm grasp on the JRPG genre, though it's not to everyone's taste. Enter *Nier*, which combines a fantasy element minus the girly men, in a story of a bloke in a post-apocalyptic world just trying to find a cure for his daughter. It helps that Nier, the titular character, sounds like Thomas Haden Church (the least androgynous man alive) and isn't afraid to drop some blue words into the conversation.

Story goes that in the future a virus has

decimated much of world's population, and a radical cure is unleashed to combat it. It doesn't work, and instead turns people into ethereal creatures called Shades, who are pretty keen on destroying things who aren't Shades.

Expect the usual mechanics of collecting items to make new weapons, and gaining XP as you fight, but there's also a magic book that follows you around, adding to your physical attacks with outlandish, *Prototype*-esque special moves of its own. It's all in real-time, though you still need to be strategic to beat the bigger enemies.

We like what we're looking at; an old-fashioned adventure combining brawling and exploration. It's just a pity that it's well below the visual excellence we've been treated to lately. Full review soon. **Paul Taylor**

## THEY SAY

"The game sees a new direction for Square Enix and one that will appeal to action, adventure and RPG fans"

## WE SAY

It has a serious story and good voice acting, plus the real-time battles combining magic and physical attacks are a blessing. Pity it looks so dated, though.



### INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** RACING | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** TBA | **DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | **DEVELOPER:** EDEN GAMES | **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA

# TEST DRIVE UNLIMITED 2

Get ready for this

### THE PITCH

*Burnout Paradise* (without the carnage) meets *The Sims* and *Midnight Club*



*Test Drive Unlimited* was a great concept on PS2 – a Massively Open Online Racing game – slightly hobbled by content missing from versions on other gaming platforms, and also because at the time only five PS2s were connected to the net. This meant that one of the most appealing aspects

of the game – that's the 'Online' bit – was a promise that never eventuated.

What *Test Drive Unlimited 2* does echoes the past: real-world machines set on part of a real-life location – Ibiza – that you'll be able to drive wherever you please and in whatever manner you please in some of the world's most

Not pictured: the Vengabus (it's coming)

luxurious motors – kind of like *Burnout Paradise* but with more grass, less ridiculous crashes, and real cars. The features list makes it sound like *Second Life*, but with four-wheeled beasts instead of whatever the hell *Second Life* has.

You'll be able to customise your online character via the cars you drive and the houses you buy and also down to the clothes you wear. Emphasis, however, remains on the driving, and both the single player and online multiplayer will overlap; expect to be able to just drive around performing missions in your 'career' and also accepting races when you like in multi.

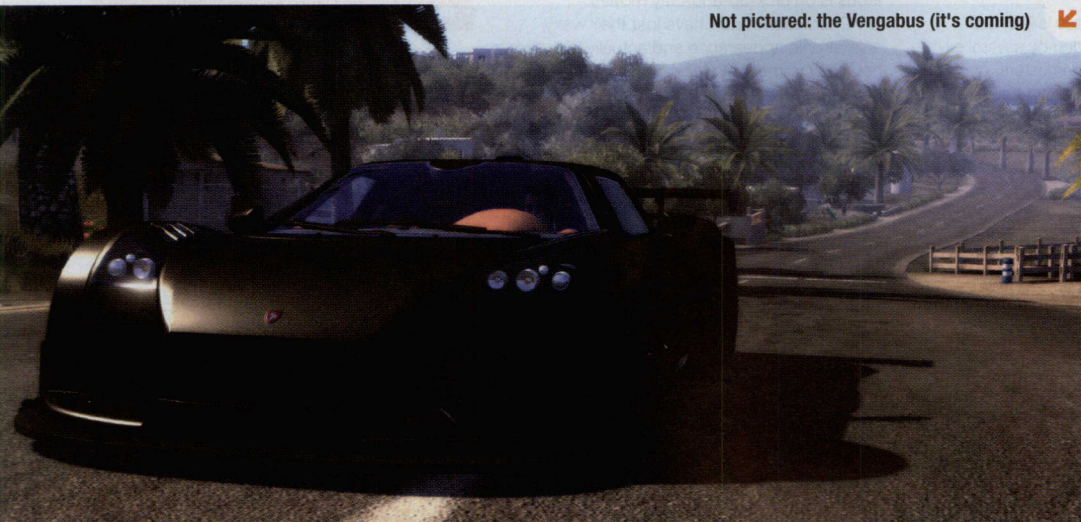
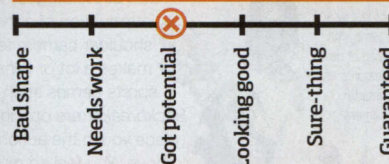
Commodores and Falcons please, Eden Games. We'd appreciate it. **Paul Taylor**

## THEY SAY

"*TDU2* blends the open world experience with realistic vehicles and performance dynamics"

## WE SAY

If they nail the handling, cruising around in the world's greatest performance cars could be a total time sponge – and a cheap way to visit Ibiza (minus the English chavs).





INCOMING



"Got him, piss off! Is he? No, says Umpire Strikes Back!"

Mutiah was a bit flat after being up all last night chucking



## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** SPORT | **EXPECTED RELEASE:** SPRING 2010 | **DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | **DEVELOPER:** TRICKSTAR GAMES | **PLAYERS:** 1-TBA

# INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 2010

Welcome back to the MCG

Let's be completely honest: we weren't in love with last year's *Ashes Cricket 2009*. Although it captured the tone of the sport, and multiplayer was fun for a hit, it was ugly, had cheap and frustrating AI, featured largely recycled commentary and it was impossible to correctly rename your squad. Either an oversight or laziness on the developer's behalf meant it was impossible to have more than six characters in your teams' first names. A short time after that, Transmission Games, the team responsible, shut down.

Stepping up to the crease is Trickstar Games (a new studio founded by several ex-Transmission staff) and Codemasters, promising to fix the areas of the game that received negativity and improve it as much as they can. There's a lot of AI balancing going on; it'll attack or defend depending on the game you're playing and the amount of overs that are set.

One of the biggest visual changes is the introduction of a third-person, over the shoulder camera for batting. This, to us, makes a lot of sense. A few team-based sports games such as *FIFA 10* and *Backbreaker* are opting for this type of view to place you in the action, rather than floating above. You feel so much more immersed, and while flicking back out to the standard

TV broadcast camera that floats above and behind the opposite wicket gives a more broad view of what's going on (on the fly by clicking R3), it feels weird after earning those runs peeking over your batsman's shoulder.

The last game had tournament modes that were difficult to set up, but now there'll be some 'pre-packaged' tournaments so you'll be able to play your own Twenty20 World Cup, Champions Trophy and so on. The Ashes content is coming later in the year but the initial focus is on pick-up-and-play modes.

Character models have lost their waxy, animatronic appearance and actually look like how they're meant to look, and move more believably (there's even a dedicated engine to represent a player's hair). Though the animation's canned, if a fieldman is chasing a ball to the boundary and knows he's not going to get it, he'll still give it his all, whereas in last year's release they just gave up.

Batting is much more analogue, implemented on one of the thumbsticks. Rather than smashing a ball to the boundary, you can now choose to chip it or just weave it through a gap in the fieldman. It feels more intuitive, and it's hopefully just one of the many improvements from last year's lame duck.

— Paul Taylor

The reverse slog

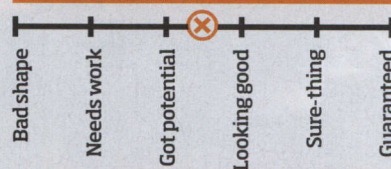


## THEY SAY

"With a focus on taking gamers into the action like never before, [it] will deliver the most authentic cricket gaming yet"

## WE SAY

The series that threatened to stall has a fresh developer on board willing to go the extra mile in order to make this playable and pretty.



## THE PITCH

The best bits of last year's game with load of new features and smarter camera.





# SCHOOL'S IN

## WANT TO GET INTO GAMES PROGRAMMING / DESIGN?

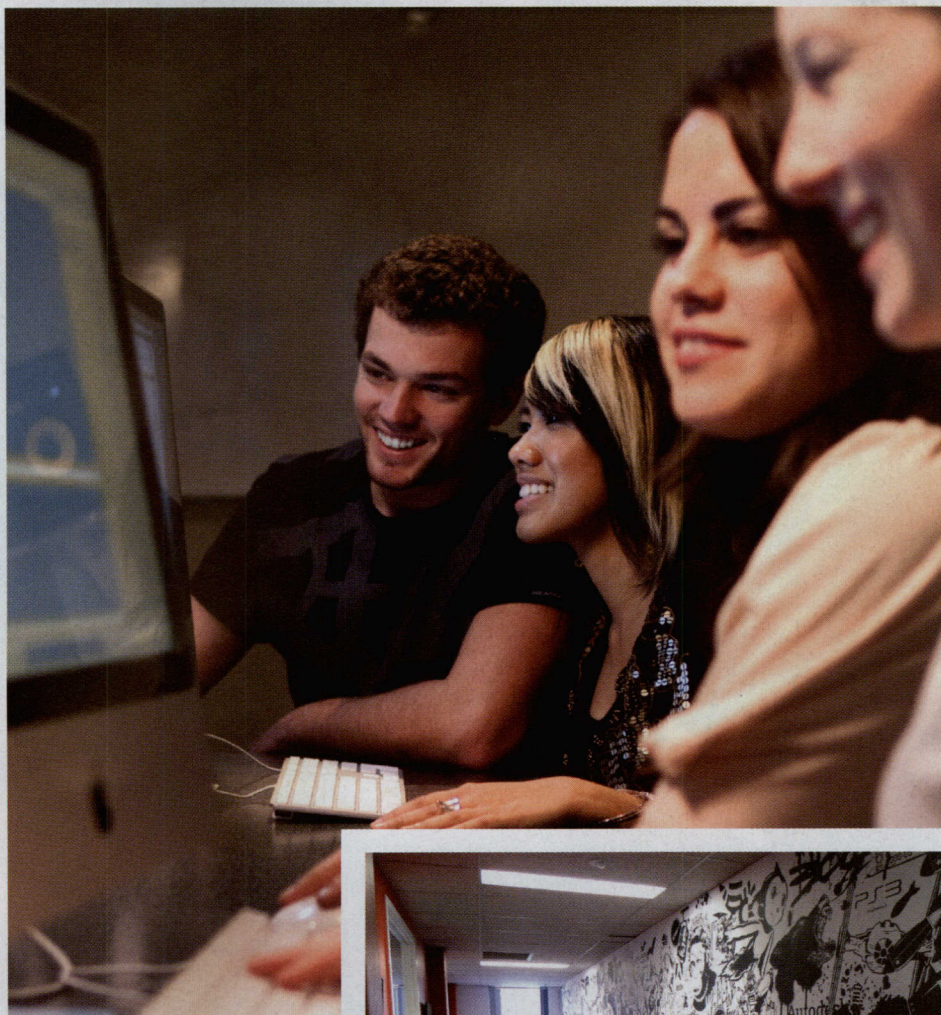
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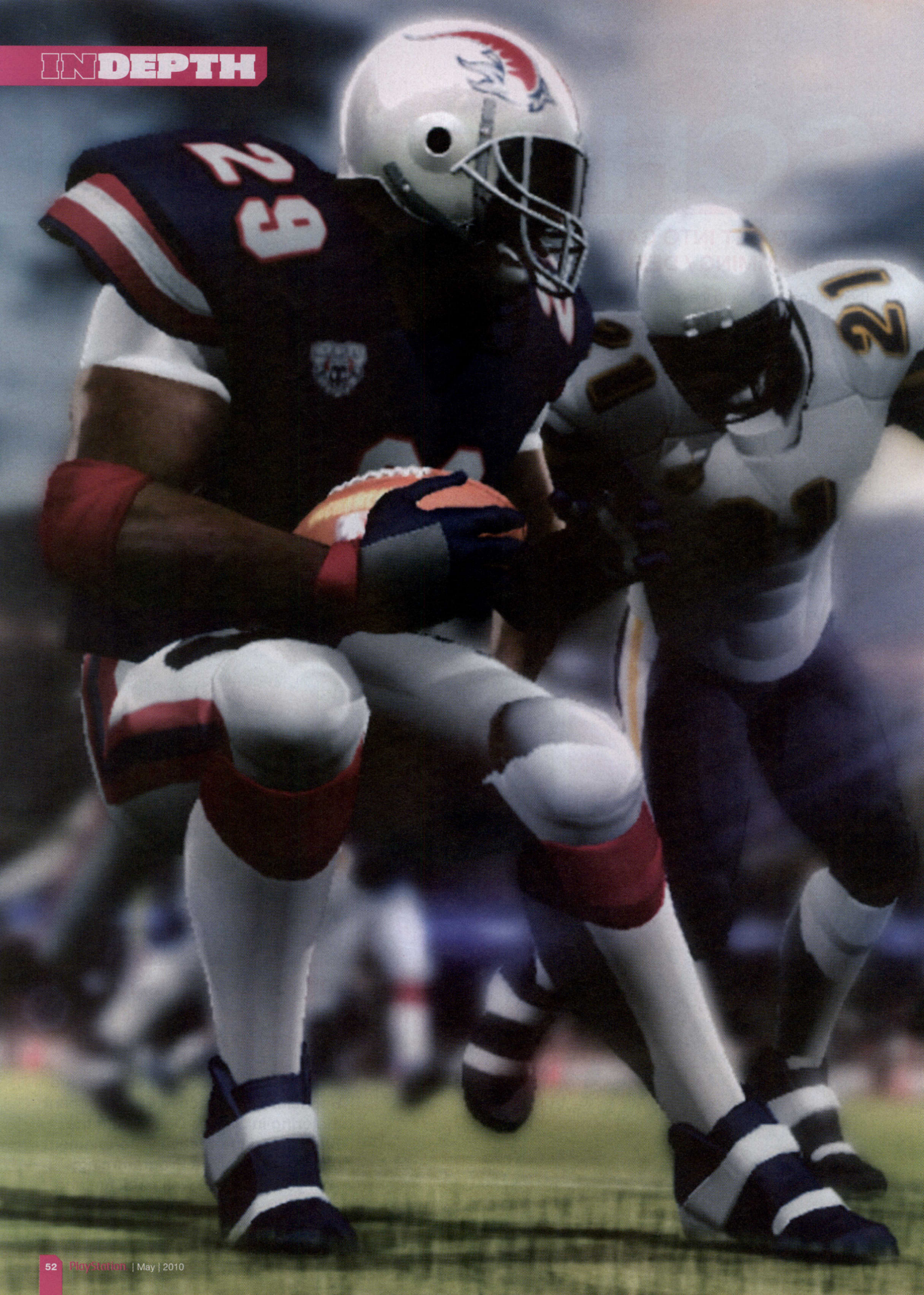


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# THE HURT LOCKER

WORDS: LUKE REILLY

The sporting arena is almost entirely sewn up by two publishers: EA and 2K. If you're going to take on these American giants you need some non-American sports.

Codies found success with its cricket games, and HES scored with the Rugby League series. The team at NaturalMotion, however, have chosen to base their debut game on the most Yankee Doodle sport of all: gridiron. Have they got more balls than brains, or are they about to steal a crucial touchdown from the big boys?

"The importance of euphoria is that it makes games real. I suppose that nowhere is that more important than in sports titles where predictability and repetition is alien to what sport itself actually is."

Rob Donald, associate producer on *Backbreaker*, has hit the nail right on the head. In a real football game – any sort of football – you'll never see the same tackle twice. There are too many variables. Sport isn't repetitive; it's dynamic. In reality, no two tackles are ever truly identical. But in videogames, they are. Pre-canned animation sees to that.

But what if there were no pre-canned tackles? What if everything that happened on field was being generated in real-time? Now you're talking NaturalMotion's language. Now you're talking euphoria.

NaturalMotion, founded in 2001, is a software company with offices in Oxford and San Francisco. NaturalMotion sprang out of Oxford University to commercialise research on human and animal movement. You might not recognise the name, but you've seen its euphoria technology in games like *Grand Theft Auto IV* and *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*.

NaturalMotion is the creator of Dynamic Motion Synthesis (DMS), a huge step forward in 3D character animation. Based on Oxford University research, DMS creates high-quality 3D character animation in real time by combining artificial intelligence, biomechanics, and dynamics simulation. Previously, animation data

had to be manually key-framed or recorded through motion capture. For many developers, it still is. But this is time consuming, expensive, and results in static non-interactive data. DMS is instead based on a full simulation of 3D characters, including the body, muscles and nervous system. This creates fully interactive animations that act and react differently *every single time*.

Torsten Reil, CEO of NaturalMotion, provides some insight on how the company is making the transition from technology provider to video game developer.

"NaturalMotion is still very much a technology company, with a growing number of publishers licensing our tech," says Reil. "The reasons to go into game development were twofold: a) We wanted to better understand how our technology is used in actual production, and how our morpheme and euphoria technologies should interface with each other. b) We saw a huge opportunity in sports games to move away from pre-canned animations to truly live action."

"For *Backbreaker*, we built up a game development team from scratch that is entirely separate from our technology team. This allows us to test our own support structures, and let the technology team to push forward without distractions from game development."

But the difference between making tech and making an entire game, to us, seems like the difference between building an engine and building an entire car. Is the gulf that vast, or are they quite similar?

"You're right, the two are quite different," says Reil.

"That's why it's so valuable as a technology company to gain direct experience in game development. Of course, there are many precedents for this, including Epic (Unreal Engine 3/*Gears of War*), Crytek (Cryengine/*Crysis*) and Criterion (Renderware/*Burnout*).

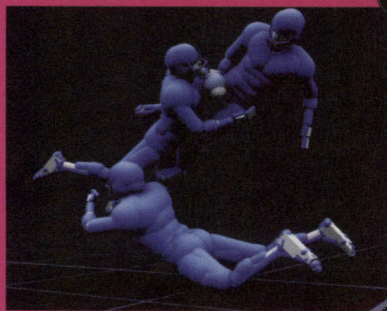
So has everything been made in-house? Is there anyone else involved with *Backbreaker* to make it happen?

"The in-game technology is all our own," answers Donald. "Obviously, we're using our euphoria and morpheme engines, but we also built a full cross-platform game engine from scratch."

"In addition to the internal dev team, we've had a several people working on certain aspects of the game from outside the team. The sound and stadium creation were handled externally, with close direction from the team of course. Both those elements were vital for us to get right if we were going to create the atmosphere we were after. The stadiums are awesome and we're really proud of the view you get of them in-game. There's nothing quite like looking around and showing the crowd jumping up and down. It's just another benefit of the camera view we have. You can actually see the stadium as your playing and soak in the atmosphere. It makes a huge difference."

"Another important aspect has been using professional football coaches to advise us on AI, play selection and game play. We've been lucky to have had access to real coaching talent from the very beginning."





## IT'S ONLY NATURAL

The key thing to keep in mind is euphoria is *not* a physics engine. euphoria simulates the human (or animal) motor nervous system. euphoria integrates with a game's existing physics engine, which provides the basic body physics (commonly known as 'ragdoll physics'). euphoria adds life to dead physics simulations. Ragdolls are dead, floppy bodies. euphoria characters instead are alive and adaptive.

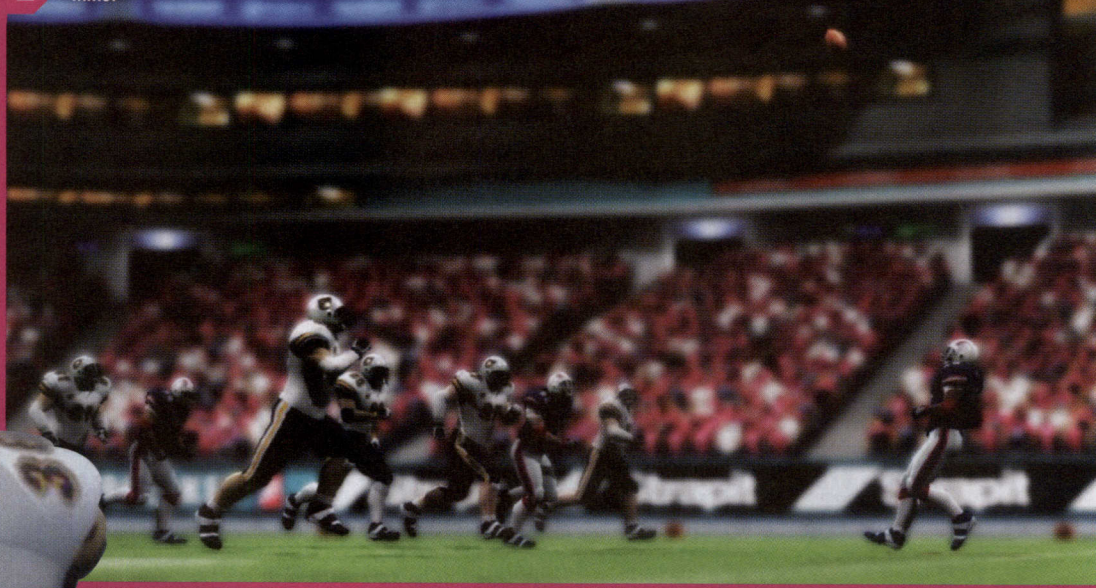
"It took many years to get euphoria to work, but we've now become quite experienced in using it," says Reil. "We have a group of Behaviour Engineers that create the dynamic AI controllers required to move the body, and a dedicated software development team that optimises the engine and creates authoring tools."

euphoria is remarkable tech, and it's hard to go back to pre-canned stuff after you've seen it in action. But why did it take so long for someone to do it?

"The technology behind euphoria is pretty complex, combining physical, muscle and motor nervous system simulations," says Reil. "It's one thing to get this to work at all, but it also has to be fast enough to run on consoles, and it needs to meet high aesthetic requirements."



➔ "Mine!"



which made a massive difference to the authenticity of the game."

But what came first: the idea of a football game powered by a unique engine, or the engine that could be adapted to be in football game?

"euphoria came first," says Reil. "Our vision was for a real-time simulation of humans that could be used in all interactive entertainment, so that games would become fully interactive and truly surprising, rather than playing back pre-canned animations from disc."

With euphoria present in a great deal of games already, do the team think this is the best example of euphoria in motion?

"Backbreaker is the first sports game that's using euphoria, so it's certainly showing the technology in a completely different setting," explains Donald. "And because sports is all about player and character interaction, we feel that it's the perfect genre for euphoria."

How have they balanced AI characters' sense of self-preservation with pure sports glory?

We'd hate to miss a game-winning touchdown because our player put a potentially-crippling injury ahead of winning. There's no I in team, right? We'd hate to have a field full of sissies.

"Your team will DIE for you on the field," answers Donald. "Well, not literally of course, but you can push them through the line time and time again and they will come back for more."

EA's *Madden* juggernaut is obviously going to be *Backbreaker*'s direct competitor, and it has over two decades of heritage. Apart from the euphoria tech, what will make players want to play *Backbreaker* over the industry leader?

"Whilst we're obviously covering the same sport as *Madden*, we genuinely feel like we're blazing a different trail," says Donald. "The last thing we wanted to do was simply copy what had been done, year on year, for the past couple of decades."


"We made several key design decisions on day one that will give gamers a totally different experience. We're not using the god-like 'blimp

“Our vision was for a real-time simulation of humans that could be **used in all interactive entertainment**”


TORSTEN REIL

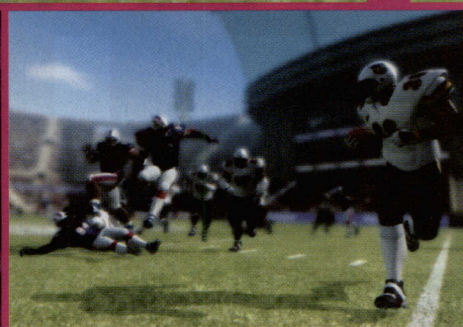




"You guys pair up in groups of three, then line up in a circle" 



Old quarterbacks never die. They just pass away... 



## THE HARD YARDS

You can put a cat in an oven, but that still don't make it a biscuit. At the end of the day, *Backbreaker* is still an American football game – and American football is about as popular as polio down under. *Backbreaker*, however, is not a noteworthy game because of its centre-stage sport – it's noteworthy because of *what it represents*. Imagine what a completely unscripted animation system could do for local full-contact sports, like Rugby League or Aussie Rules. Instead of painstakingly building stilted, repetitive individual animations for every single thing that can happen on field, the system will generate endlessly unique ones for you, on-the-fly. Who wants to see euphoria-powered NRL and AFL games? We know we do. NaturalMotion's euphoria can create the kind of tackles that'd make Ray Warren hyperventilate.

cam' that people have seen in the past in football games. We are aiming to create an exciting on the field experience by sitting the camera right down behind the player you are controlling. "Your readers will know what that feels like from action-orientated titles on the PS3 so they'll easily be able to think what that's going to feel like. You've got one minute left, tied game. The camera's right in on the action as you snap the ball, drop back, scan for an open receiver, dodge an incoming blitz and fire off a winning touchdown pass. You will NEVER, EVER get that level of intensity if you're watching the action from up in the stands. We're not about watching football, we're about PLAYING football."

The team stresses it's going to be a more straightforward experience too.


"We're trying to make playing football, and having fun whilst doing it, a lot easier too," continues Donald. "We moving away from

endless button presses, so we're mapping moves to the right stick that will feel a lot more intuitive. Flick the stick up to throw a bullet pass. If you're running with the ball, then jab the stick to the left and you'll do a hard juke. Linking these moves together, it feels like you're dancing nimbly down the field, which is how all the best players make it look. It's all about finesse and control, and power when you need it."

So you've made a sports game; what's next?

"The whole team is concentrating on wrapping *Backbreaker* up right now," says Donald. "We have exciting plans for the future, but it's nothing that we can talk about right now. I think I can probably say that we know what our tech can do and where it can make a difference. We're excited for the future."

*Backbreaker* will be released in May.

You may want to touch base with your chiropractor. 



WORDS: LUKE REILLY

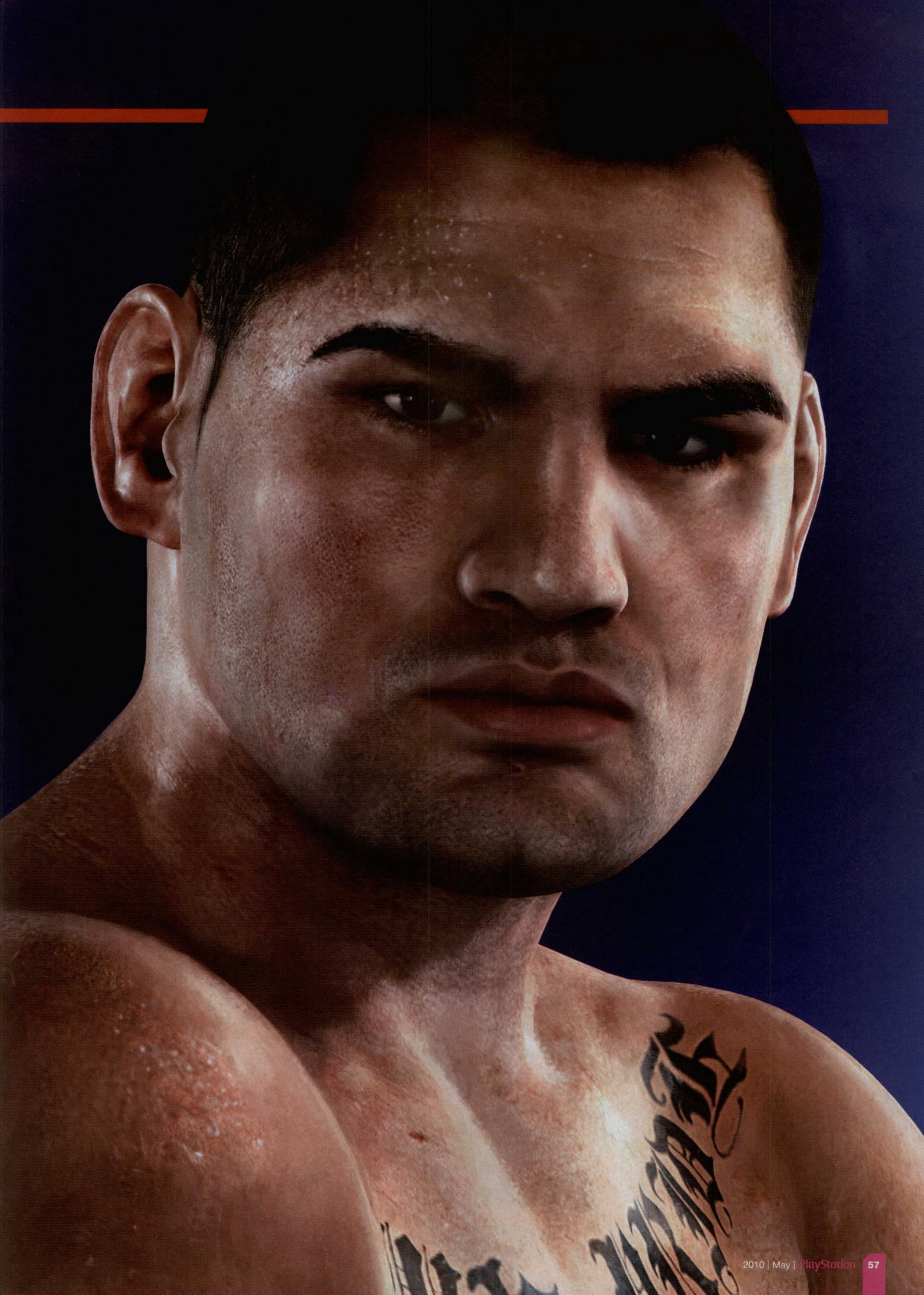
# IF YOU WANT BLOOD (YOU'VE GOT IT)

A few metres in front of us there's an Australian man choking an American man. He's got him pinned against the ground, and it's clear the American is in strife. But the nearby police officers simply watch the situation unfold with arms crossed, and the surrounding crowd simply cheers them on. The American is being squeezed, and squeezed. Surely he can't take much more of this. The crowd cheers louder. The police remain stoic.

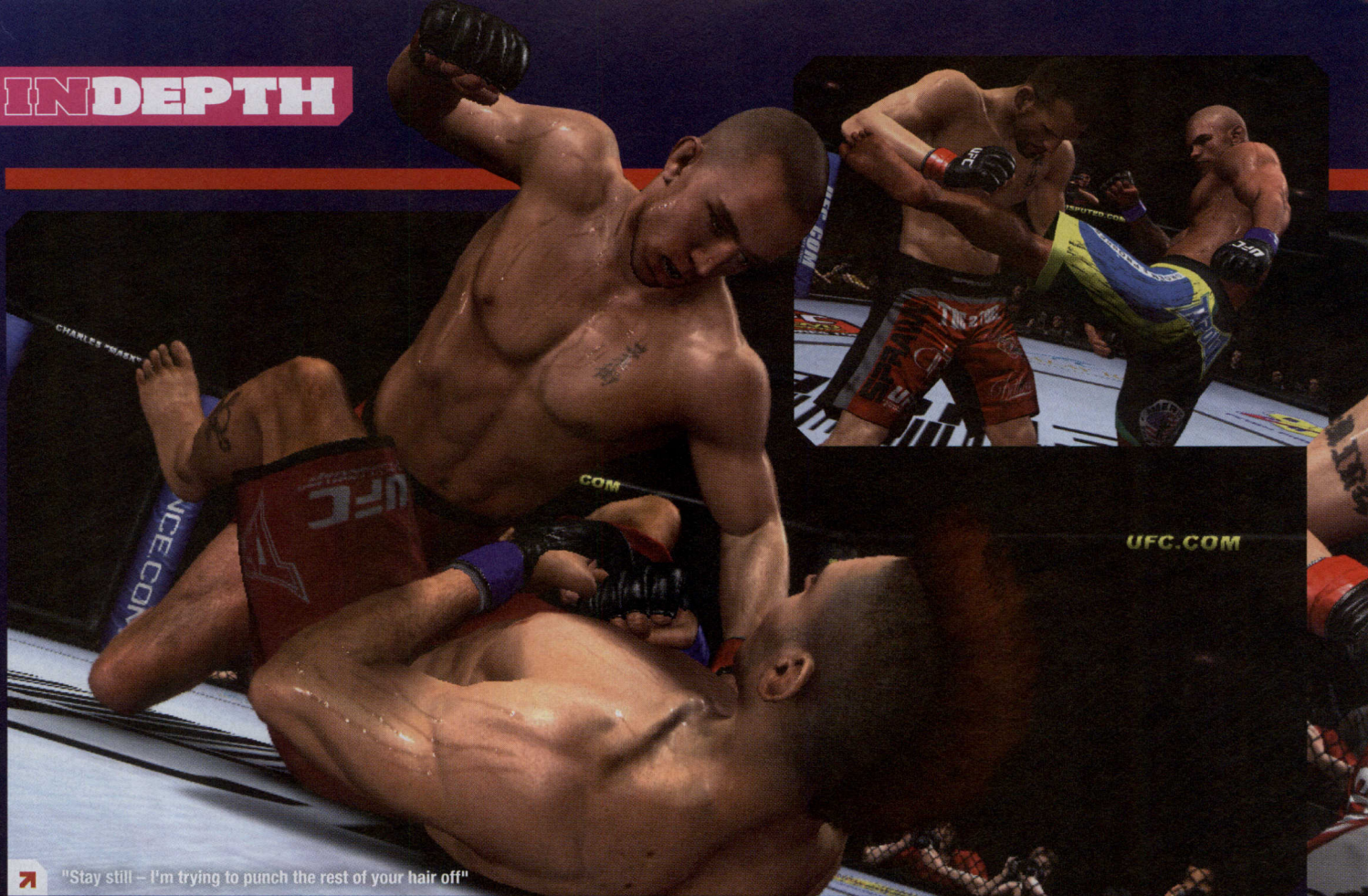
And then the bell rings.

**Welcome to the UFC.**









➤ "Stay still – I'm trying to punch the rest of your hair off"



At the media day prior to UFC 110, to showcase the upcoming *UFC Undisputed 2010*, UFC vice president Don Gold assured us personally that if we weren't fans of MMA going into UFC 110, we would be when we came out.

Turns out he was right. It's surprisingly fascinating. Maybe it's the convict blood in us.

UFC 110, in February, was the best-attended UFC event outside of North America in its short but potent history. Nearly 18,000 people were on hand at Sydney's Acer Arena to watch nine clashes between 18 highly trained martial artists – and they loved every second of it.

The UFC's first trip down under was a huge success made even better by local boy George Sotiropoulos's unanimous points decision over former lightweight title contender Joe Stevenson of the US.

On the jumbo screen before the match Stevenson

claimed his aim was to silence the crowd. What he got was exactly the opposite.

"Geeeeooooorrrrrgie, Geeeeooooorrrrrgie," chanted the crowd as the Victorian completely dominated his opponent. The fight went for the full 15 minutes, but Stevenson was outclassed in every department. The American MMA veteran was all mouth and no trousers.

Unfortunately Sotiropoulos won't feature in *UFC Undisputed 2010* – maybe next year, along with the Acer Arena – but *UFC 2010* has been bolstered by more than enough other additions. It seems likely that, like Sotiropoulos, it's going to blow its competition out of the water.

We ask *UFC 2010* producer Neven Dravinski whether the *UFC* series has generated a very vocal and dedicated following of fans that the team listened to when developing this sequel.

"We're really aware of all the sorts of things that people thought were lacking in the last game," says Dravinski, laughing. "Actually, we're probably the most vocal group ourselves. So I hate reading online comments that say, 'Oh, they were lazy, they could have put in 'feature x' because it's three lines of code.' And we hear that stuff because we read every board."

"Probably the coolest thing is watching the YouTube footage that fans put up. It's essentially like a focus test with millions of people and you're seeing how they're fighting, how

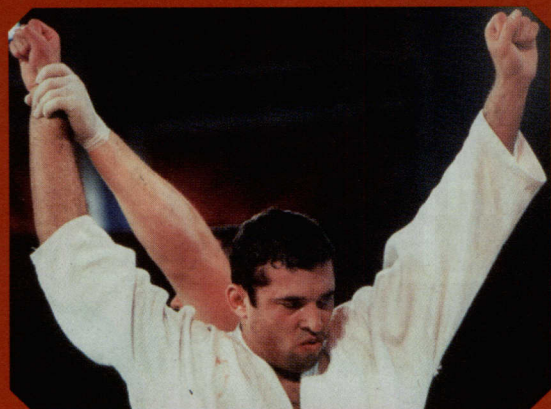
“It seems likely that, like Sotiropoulos, it's going to **blow its competition out of the water**”







Fist. Face



## INSTANT EXPERT

Dana White, president of Zuffa and co-owner of the UFC has built his organisation into the fastest growing sports organisation in history. To put it in perspective, the company was acquired by White and his business partners in 2001 for US\$2 million. Eight years later they received a qualified offer exceeding US\$1 billion. UFC accounts for the overall majority of the MMA market and includes over 36 live events per year, over a dozen different TV shows and thousands of hours of broadcast and cable programming yearly, in 20 countries. UFC 1, with its winner Royce Gracie, is pictured above. It's now up to 111.

MMA is not unrestrained violence. It's the application of a variety of fighting arts, most far

more ancient than boxing. 'Big' John McCarthy that said, "The only goal of boxing is to either hit one's opponent in the head so hard that he can not get up or to hit one's opponent so many times in the head that the referee has to step in and stop the fight."

There's an argument that MMA is safer than boxing. Fewer rounds, no count after a knockout and because clinches and grappling are not illegal there's less focus on continually punching the head.

The key stat is that in state-sanctioned MMA competition there has been one recorded death in 16 years. However, in the past 16 years there have been over 110 deaths in boxing. In fact, since 1890 there has not been a year without multiple recorded deaths due to boxing.

they're trying to exploit the game. It's also cool to see that the elements of the game that we snuck in, without really telling the players how to do it, have been found out and are being used – which is really refreshing.

"But that's the good and bad thing of the Internet. You have this access to a bunch of people, but its anonymous so people can make comments regardless of how educated they may be on the subject matter, or not. But it is what it is, they're still the consumer and you still try to put out the best product you can. Your typical MMA fan is one of the most vocal fans around and if something isn't perfect, it flat-out sucks to them."

The list of improvements is vast. *UFC 2009* had 80 fighters – many of whom were simply created using the game's create-a-fighter system. *UFC 2010* features over 100 fighters, each individually modelled and textured based on actual photography.

Certain fighters can now fight southpaw, with the ability to swap to orthodox if the fighter can manage it, and the sways and leans can be fully exploited to dodge strikes and deliver even more powerful ones of your own. Putting your weight behind a hit by leaning into it will give the punch increased torque. That means more damage dealt.

Strict fighting archetypes have been removed, so while *UFC 2009* clearly defined

your fighter's style, in *UFC 2010* you can pick moves and techniques from multiple disciplines. Fighters can now deliver a smorgasbord of pain from around the world: karate, Greco-Roman wrestling and sambo move sets have also been added to the buffet. If you want to talk numbers it's been said *UFC 2010* will boast four times the amount of strikes, three times the amount of ground animations and twice the amount of submissions.

Speaking of submissions, already-begun submissions can now be switched, and submission defence has ditched button-mashing in favour of rapidly-rotating the stick – or 'shining'. Players can also adjust their posture in the various positions – you can posture up unleashed a series of blows or stay low to prevent your opponent from transitioning. The quarter circle control system to turn around on the ground remains, but it's also been migrated to the standing clinch game.

You can also use the cage this time around. Pin an opponent against the cage and his strikes will be less effective. Your strikes, however, will be more effective.

All of these improvements probably weren't necessary after the *UFC 2009* shipped 3.5 million copies straight out of the gate, but Gold was quick to stress that the



UFC is committed to working as closely with THQ as possible in order to bring the best product to their fans.

But did the developers anticipate the huge success of its debut UFC game?

"Well, it's a humbling number, without a doubt," says Dravinski. "Certainly our marketing team didn't predict those sorts of numbers and I only got an inkling as to how it was going to go when I started showing the game. The initial feedback from the press was great.

"Mind you, we're our own worst critics y'know? When we looked at it we only saw the things we didn't do, or could have done. The sways and the southpaw, for example, were in there but they weren't working to the extent that we wanted. As a result, we've done a lot of things this year to bring this sequel to the next level.

"Certainly the success of the first game you could attribute to the rise and success of the UFC sport brand but in addition I like to think that we brought out a pretty damn good product too."

Gold took time to mention just how useful a tool the game series has been to educate would-be fans of UFC about the ins-and-outs of MMA. Certainly, watching it live is equally educational – and you get a firmer grasp about the incredibly technical aspects of the grappling, for instance, by seeing it for real – but it shows MMA is far more than simple human cockfighting. Dravinski agrees with the sentiment.

"Yeah, certainly with the 2009 product we faced that challenge," he says. "People could quickly relate to striking – everybody knows the basics of what a punch is – the bigger problem was how to encapsulate a movement set for the ground game – something that is less readily familiar – and how do we translate that to a controller? In the end, we manage to get in the same techniques we used in the game are the exact same ones that the fighters use to get out of trouble in the Octagon.

"Some of the most encouraging comments I read on the Internet are ones that go, 'I never even liked UFC before I played this, but now I'm much more interested in it'. So yeah, people are getting educated through the game. As a result, I think the UFC



brand recognises our global outreach and the accessibility of our game."

So how long do they give it until the UFC series is uttered in the same breath as *Madden* and *FIFA*, or do they think they're already there?

"Well, I think it'd be egotistical of me to say that we're there already, but I do believe that we're making incredible strides," says Dravinski. "Certainly those sports have had hundreds of years of culture. The Superbowl in the US, for example, everything revolves around Superbowl Sunday. I think MMA and UFC are getting there it wouldn't surprise me if in a couple of years the sales of a UFC game eclipsed those titles. The sport and the brand have a long way to go, obviously, but when you look at the global appeal of it, it's not far from the realm of possibility."

After our thorough hands-on we can clearly see where this game has improved,

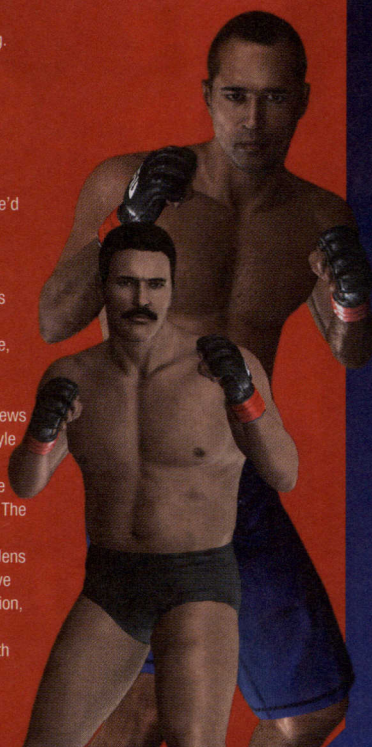
“It shows MMA is far more than simple human cockfighting”

## THAT'S NOT ALL, FOLKS

The additions don't stop coming. The (apparently) famous 'Bruce Buffer 180' has been inserted into the game. After hearing Buffer's voice in person when he temporarily gatecrashed our interview with Neven Dravinski we'll go on the record saying we'd like this man to narrate our life, such is the power of this man's vocal chords.

Further presentation tweaks include post-fight outfits; real fighters' official kits will be there, as well as the option to create your own for custom fighters. Broadcast-style pre-fight interviews add a stack of credibility and style to the overall package.

The PS3 version will receive a bunch of exclusive extras too. The PS3 version will feature fighters Royce Gracie, Dan Severn and Jens Pulver in addition to the exclusive Ultimate Fights for the PS3 version, like UFC 60 – Matt Hughes vs. Royce Gracie and UFC 66 – Keith Jardine vs. Forrest Griffin.





These guys are BJ experts BJJ experts



## MAN UP

In the wild, males fight for any number of reasons. Dominance, territory, mating rights, anything. Polar bears, lions, gazelles – if it's got a cock, chances are it'll want to slash, swat or headbutt the snot out of something else with one at some point.

Don't be confused. We all crawled out of the same primordial soup, and that fact we've evolved to become to first mammals to wear pants doesn't change that. Violence *is* inappropriate in normal circumstances. It's not tolerated in civilised community, as it's not beneficial. Contact and combat sports, however, are just that. *Sports*. It's the thrill of competition that drives people to participate in it and to watch it.

It seems to us the UFC is a shining beacon of manliness in a world getting sissier as the days go by. Dravinski's thoughts?

"You know what? Yeah. You do bring up an interesting point," he says. "When you look around culturally, there's been this emasculation of males. You know, the term 'metrosexual' didn't exist a few years ago.

"Also, I think mixed martial arts does have a certain beauty to it. You'll get uneducated types referring to it as 'human cockfighting' but you're actually seeing the most highly skilled, highly trained athletes doing hand-to-hand combat.

"What's really interesting to me is that watching these athletes and these fights makes you develop a much greater appreciation for your fellow man. I've asked these fighters if they've ever been in a bar with someone causing trouble and how they'd handle it. Believe or not, these guys are the most calm and collected individuals in the world. They'd give the antagonist every opportunity to back off and walk away. And you'd never know, man. Any lightweight in this sport would annihilate a 200-plus pound opponent. Knowing that makes you appreciate people a bit more – because you don't know if the guy next to you is a destructive machine."

"Honestly? Your eye has exploded. I can't fix that"

which is virtually everywhere. It also feels to us like, despite the fact the moveset has increased dramatically, it may be a little easier to grasp. After a few minutes in the Octagon, UFC newbies from the office were already beginning to warm to the controls.

It looks great too. We were the first to see the PS3 version in action, and the visuals are fantastic. Even the audio seems to have improved markedly. The crowds sound even more vocal, and the commentary feels fresh.

It's a realistic, brutal and highly accurate recreation of top-tier MMA fighting. It will impress people, and Dravinski agrees.

"When I look at YouTube footage of the old game after working on this new one, the sequel just looks so much better, so much more fluid, so much more impressive," he says. "We set out to destroy the 2009 product and I feel that we did. You'll see that visually and also when you have the opportunity to play it. Sitting down and playing it in the office its pretty uplifting to play a quick bout and think, wow, this is pretty f--king cool."





# ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST

In the tense serenity of a frontier town, a tumbleweed rolls across the dirt that serves as the main strip, while the population of approximately 30 goes about their business. The silence is shattered as a rag-tag posse rolls in looking for something to shoot. It doesn't take them long before they're shooting each other in what's set to be one of the toughest sandbox action games of the year

WORDS: PAUL TAYLOR

It's no secret we're hanging out for *Red Dead Redemption*, though most of our excitement has been escalating due to hands-on time with the single-player mode and the journey undertaken by the game's protagonist John Marston. Marston, however, took a backseat in the stagecoach as we jumped into the game world, saddled up and formed a bad-arse posse of scruffy-looking cowpokes, Mexicans and varmints, to take on outlaws in the game's multiplayer mode.

The most original feature of *Redemption*'s multiplayer experience is the ability to form a posse in Free Roam mode. Eschewing a traditional lobby system, Free Roam is like a free-form story mode in itself as you form a team and explore the world. A posse can have a maximum of eight people, and when everyone's walking down the street or riding on their steed, guns drawn, it feels spectacular. Other game modes can have a maximum of 16 players.

After spawning into the world it's only a few button presses before you're in your group with one person as the posse leader. If you play the game wearing a headset your conversation can be heard by other (non-posse) players that are close by, though the rest of your team will hear everything, no

matter where they are.

Like in the single-player game, townships have people going about their business, and criminals causing trouble. Forming a rough plan – go here, shoot that – we trekked from a township and across the rocky plains to a house on a hill at Twin Rocks that had a group of outlaws using it as their base. As we approached shots rang out though we stormed though, dodging the 'fire bottles' – Western parlance for Molotov cocktails – that rained down.

There weren't many structures surrounding the house, so we had to take cover behind rocks and a few walls to avoid being shot up. Although it's frantic, playing *Redemption* is quite different to *GTAIV* since your weaponry is 100 years out of date. Guns, especially pistols, take a while to reload, as your character has to load the cylinder and flick it back into place. Sniper rifles have a slightly warped and dirty scope. It adds to the experience, and makes you think smarter about what you're doing.

Our posse rapidly cleared up the perimeter before storming the house. On horseback. One of the doors was wide enough to allow for one steed to make it through, and after lobbing a bundle of dynamite into the front room we high-tailed it, emphatically clearing out the

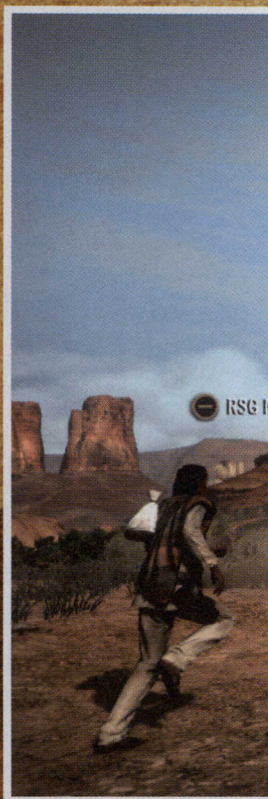
band of bad hombres.

Horses act as cars in *Redemption*.

Much like your guns, your first mount is fairly rudimentary: a donkey. Gain more XP and your breed of horse improves, becoming faster and, presumably, with more stamina. Tapping the sprint button whilst on horseback will see your character dig his spurs in and the horse picking up pace. Give him too much encouragement and it'll kick you off, though you can call it back by whistling to it using a button on the d-pad.

Opening up the map as leader allows you to place a waypoint on it for others to see, and that'll be represented on their mini-map. It basically means that you can set a destination and easily organise a way for people to get there. You won't just be taking on outlaws in Free Roam, as you can also race from point to point, talk to other characters that may need something doing, hunt animals and pick herbs. We're really not sure what the point or benefit is of the last activity at this stage as 'Red Dead Horticulturist' doesn't quite have the same appeal. To us.

As you ride through the world it's possible (and probable) that you'll get into trouble if you use civilians and animals as target practice. Your crime, and bounty attached to it, flash up





"Looks like we're back on the wagon boys. Wait, is on the wagon good, or off the wagon good? Is the wagon a metaphor for alcohol, or... not? I'm confused"



We also love to get our hands on a good chest



Our posse rapidly cleared up the perimeter before **storming the house. On horseback**



## ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

Everything you do in Free Roam earns XP, and the more stylishly you do it, the more you earn. Shoot a dude in the chest and the points will tick up. Make it a headshot and you'll rake in a bit more. Shoot the dude's hat off or – awesomely – his gun out of his hand before putting him in the dirt and you're doing well. Once you level-up you'll find better, more powerful weapons to dish out justice. We managed to find a double barrel shotgun that was devastating, and throwing knives that we tossed into someone's sternum and then retrieved. Bloodied rag not included.



He he he. A 'butte'



## MODUS EXPLODUS

### Shootout and Gang Shootout

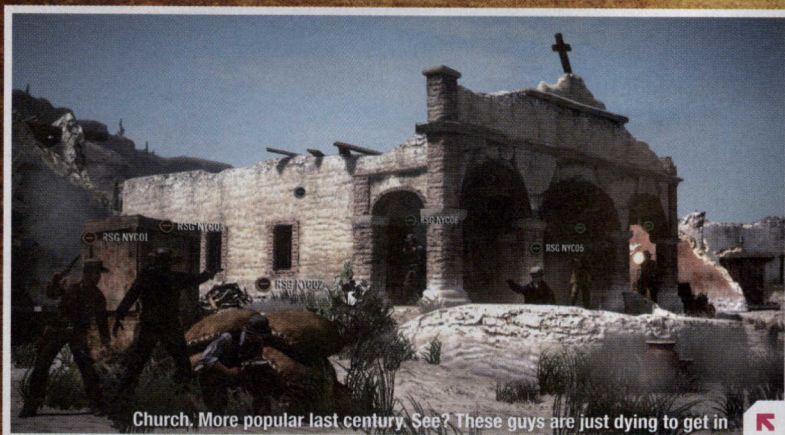
Anyone who's ever played a straight-up deathmatch or team deathmatch knows how this works: with a time limit to watch you have to blast the opposing team to get the highest score. Simple. Armadillo is a simple frontier town with a wide main street, a few buildings to gain a height advantage and some pens filled with pigs, sheep and chickens.

### Gold Rush

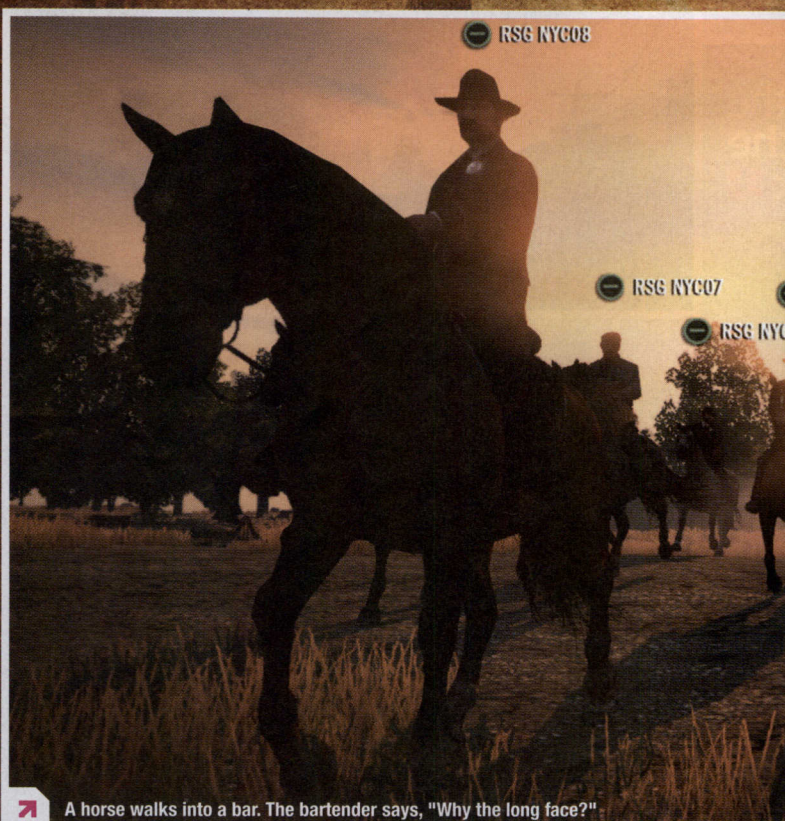
Saddlebags filled with gold are scattered around a township, and various crates are placed nearby to drop the bags in. It doesn't matter which bag you take to which crate, it only matters that you get the most number of bags in crates before the time runs out. Although you can carry up to two bags at once, gold is pretty heavy so the more you carry the slower you'll go. Shooting opponents doesn't increase your score but it may increase your life expectancy. Chuparosa is a Mexican outpost surrounded by a high wall, with a few buildings and an open area inside that snipers love to watch.

### Hold Your Own

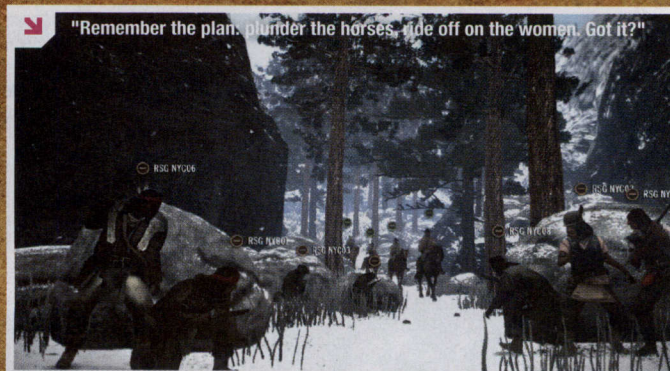
Capture the flag. Or, in this case, capture the bag. The two teams have a crate and a bag of gold in each base that they need to defend, whilst trying to steal their opponents'. If the bag is picked up and then dropped it doesn't go back to the crate: it stays where it lies. Diez Coronas has two small properties with horse sheds and a few shacks, split apart by a small mountainous area. Handily, Gatling guns and cannons are placed on a couple of intersections and on the mountainside. These could prove decisive.



Church. More popular last century. See? These guys are just dying to get in



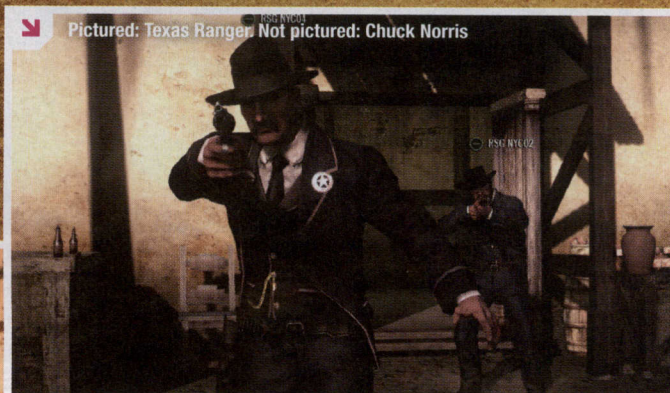
A horse walks into a bar. The bartender says, "Why the long face?"



"Remember the plan: plunder the horses, ride off on the women. Got it?"



We'd watch horse racing if jockeys had guns



Pictured: Texas Ranger. Not pictured: Chuck Norris





"Marty, you're not thinking fourth dimensionally. You'll instantly be transported back into 1885, and those Indians won't even be there!"



“Forming a posse, cruising through the world and playing how you want to play is going to suck hours out of your life”



on screen, and lawmen will come to kill you. Gain a high enough bounty and another player may come to collect, and either kill or capture you. We presume this is how it may work, but it hasn't been confirmed. Immediately after committing a crime the GTAIV-style blue and red circles come up in your mini-map that dictate where you shouldn't be if you want to escape intact. Lawmen shoot to kill in the Wild West.

Free Mode, though, is just a gateway into the traditional modes. We saw four of the modes in the game: free-for-all 'Shootout' (deathmatch) in Chuparosa, a Mexican settlement; 'Gang Shootout' (team deathmatch) in the town of Armadillo; 'Goldrush' (free-for-all capture the flag with multiple flags) in Chuparosa; and 'Hold Your Own' (team-based capture the flag) in Diez Coronas, two properties separated by buttes (see 'Modus Explodius'). All the explicit multiplayer modes in *Redemption* are set in locations you'll find in the single-player game, and it's a testament to the design of the world that everything blends together so well.

Before each match every player is given the opportunity to get a head start or bonus in a shoot out. It's hard to overstate how cool this is. Depending on the game mode, whether it's a team-based round or every man for himself, you'll either be lined up as team versus team or in a tight circle with a designated target. In the former, your hands will be twitching by your sides until it's time to draw and you have a split second to cap the other guy before he gets

you. In the latter, you're able to aim your gun at your adversary until round starts. It looks like something out of *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. The feeling at the start is tense as a bunch of dudes are pointing their guns at each other, and as soon as you can empty your chamber it's a cacophony of gunfire until one man's left standing. Win the round and you'll either enter the arena early or be given an extra \$100 or so that aids your progress in the match.

Dead Eye, the mechanic that slows down time and allows Marston to loose off bullets much quicker than he normally could, is in multiplayer. While it doesn't slow time down, clicking in the right thumbstick makes the world turn sepia and then 'paint' a number of crosses onto your target. Get your opponent in just the right spot and you'll take him out with ease.

Despite a couple of problems, like sticking to weird surfaces when behind cover and not feeling in total control of Dead Eye (that won't be an issue with more multiplayer practice), this is looking great. The location sets it apart, and as we've said before it looks a treat. Forming a posse, cruising through the world and playing how you want to play is going to suck hours out of your life. *Redemption*'s a game that is going to do what *GTAIV* did – creating stories with your character as the main star that you'll tell other people.

We guessed that the breadth of it would be amazing. Now we know that it is. *Redemption*'s coming, and Hell's coming with it.



[illegible]

# GOD OF WAR

The image shows the front cover of the God of War video game for the PlayStation 3. The cover art features a close-up of Kratos's face, with his iconic red and white armor and a large, detailed eye. The title "GOD OF WAR" is prominently displayed in a stylized, metallic font across the top. The PlayStation 3 logo is in the top left corner, and the "Only On PlayStation" tagline is in the top right. A "MATURE 17+" rating label is visible in the bottom left, and a "BEST OF PS3" award logo is in the bottom right. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a mythological or war-torn setting.



**SONY**  
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## THIS ISSUE

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“One of the most **exciting and entertaining** open-world romps we've experienced in years”

## 68 JUST CAUSE 2

Mission: Incredible

## WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS MONTH



- 60%** Parachuting out of helicopters
- 20%** ↓, ↘, → + punch
- 15%** Animal wrangling
- 5%** Making motorbike noises

## REVIEW RATINGS

PlayStation  
**GOLD AWARD**

**10** Incredible: Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be perfect. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an amazing fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible praise.

PlayStation  
**SILVER AWARD**

**9** Excellent: An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the very best in its genre, a 9 comes with high praise.

PlayStation  
**BRONZE AWARD**

**8** Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments, despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

**7** Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a bunch of moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

**6** Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

**5** Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but few will want to play a game that half sucks.

**4** Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

**3** Very disappointing: Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

**2** Terrible: Virtually nothing good here at all, and definitely not worth the effort of removing the wrapper.

**1** The worst: Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality.



We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible.





## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** ACTION ADVENTURE | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** NAMCO-BANDAI PARTNERS | **DEVELOPER:** AVALANCHE | **PLAYERS:** 1 | **RRP:** \$109.95

# JUST CAUSE 2

PlayStation  
Official Magazine - Australia  
**SILVER  
AWARD**

“Yeah I’m freeeeeeeeee... I’m free-fallin’”

If you put a gun to our head and demanded we sum up *Just Cause 2*’s nature in two words, we’d blurt out our answer in a nanosecond. “Stripper zeppelins”. What the hell is that, you ask? Well, a stripper zeppelin is when two, conspicuously breast-looking, balloons are firmly strapped together, under-slung with a dedicated strip-centric platform and suspended thousands of feet in the stratosphere.

Who exactly is the stripper zeppelins target clientele? Difficult to say. We can confirm that it is an equal-opportunity airborne establishment (offering both male and female dancers), but beyond the occasional visit from a horny chopper pilot – and us – we have no bloody idea who’s paying to keep this nude-fest afloat. In our mind the humble stripper zeppelin exists for one purpose; to succinctly epitomise *Just Cause 2*’s nonsensical, ‘wouldn’t-it-be-cool’ approach to game design. It’s there just ‘cause lap dances at three thousand feet are awesome.

While the original *Just Cause* turned our head with its massive, exotic environments, the repetitive gameplay all but ruined the holiday. Even in terms of graphics it let us down; it suffered from some sort of sandbox near-sightedness where the expansive vistas looked achingly beautiful but the finer details were muddy. It’s fortunate then that this latest iteration manages to pistol-whip its predecessor in every department.

*Just Cause 2* takes place on the fictional, island of Panau a 1000 square-kilometre

playground sculpted with snow-covered mountains, sun-roasted deserts and lush, verdant jungle. Protagonist Rico Rodriguez, returns – and, if you never played the first game, he is like the Spanish non-union equivalent of James Bond – with a mission is to overthrow the evil dictator Baby Panay and to confront his former CIA taskmaster, Tom Sheldon.

To achieve all this Rico must play three warring Panauan factions against each other to build up ‘Chaos’ – which in turn triggers the main plot missions. Honestly though, you probably won’t be following the narrative with any real interest. It does get awesome towards the tail end of the show when the ninjas rock up – yes, ninjas – but for the most part the characters sport such horrific accents you’ll tune out after an hour or so.

A go-nowhere storyline is usually a deal-breaker, but you’ll just be having far too much fun with the Hollywood, action-movie inspired lunacy to care. Rico Rodriguez’s ‘hook’ – if you’ll excuse the pun – is a grappling gun/ parachute system that allows him to tether to practically any surface and use it to ‘zip-paraglide’ around the environment. This addictive mechanic feels something along the lines of web-slinging in a Spider-Man game – but inverted, and with a rocket launcher.

And that’s just the beginning of the experimental shenanigans you can get up to with the grapple gun. The device also allows you to connect two external objects together with a grapple cable. Here are some examples we

prepared earlier; connecting a bad guy with a propane tank (before shooting it), linking a bizjet to a fighter jet flying in the opposite direction and hooking a dude on his motorcycle to the spinning blade of a wind-generator. Trust us: grappling gun = hilarity pranks aplenty.

The parachute also comes in mighty handy too, especially when you’re attempting to blast mofos and make crap explode. Anything bearing a crimson star is a Baby Panay structure and a goldmine for Chaos, be it a water tower, military base, or a cheesy propaganda stand. Unlike the original game, these sub-missions don’t feel repetitious and reward you with both wanton destruction and the chance to unlock beefier weapons and myriad vehicle parts. There’s always a downside though; causing explosions is like playing ‘banjo chase music’ around rednecks – your ‘Heat’ bar skyrockets and the idiots come a-gunning for you.

Because Rico doesn’t rely on official support from the CIA in this game, you must look to the black market for all of your weapons and your on-demand vehicle drops (and remember folks, if your missile-equipped super jet isn’t delivered in 30 seconds – it’s free!). Once you make some headway into the game you’ll earn access to several new weapons to the franchise including a rocket launcher with laser-controlled rockets, remote-triggered C4, a minigun and a one-handed grenade launcher. Disclaimer: the fact that it is designed to only require one hand bespeaks of its ability to be used in conjunction with the grapple gun. It



## WORSE THAN

GTA: EPISODES FROM LIBERTY CITY



## BETTER THAN

SAINTS ROW 2



## NO LIMITS

It's tough to describe in words the kind of unhinged stunts you can pull off in *Just Cause 2*. You can attach a plane... to a plane. In mid-air. *While riding one of them*. You can pick up a car with a chopper and use it as a wrecking ball, or simply drop it on people. We're in the process of assembling a huge glut of movies we've made using *Just Cause 2*'s video capture feature — a feature sorely lacking in the likes of *Grand Theft Auto: Episodes from Liberty City*. If you've got any incredible videos you've made yourself, however, don't hesitate to let us have a look. We can't wait to see what people get up to!

“This latest iteration manages to pistol-whip its predecessor in every department”

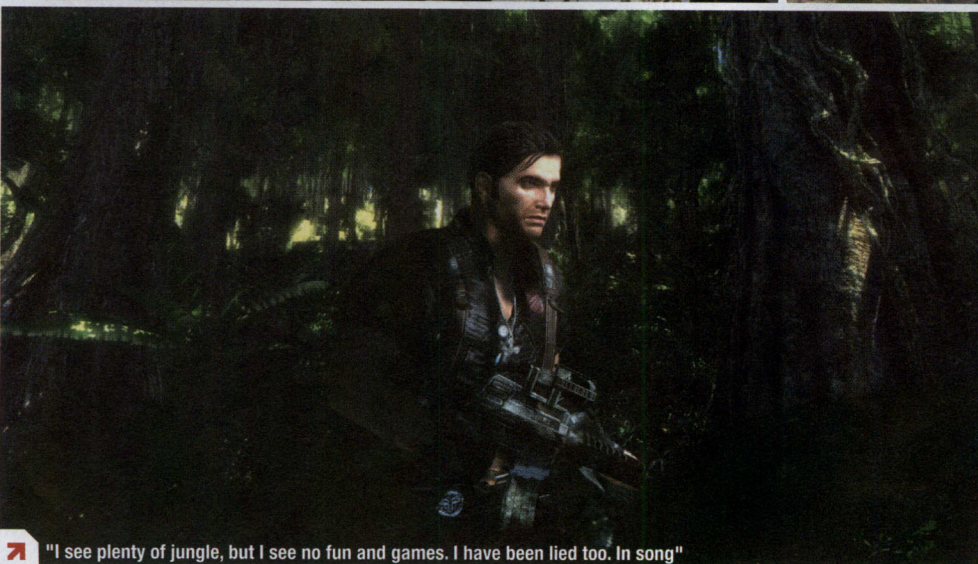


➤ Rico has an infinite supply of parachutes. But even if he just had one, we're not sure where he keeps it. In his pocket?

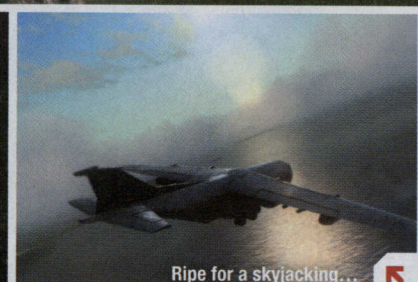


➤ We don't want to blow smoke up anyone's arse, but *Just Cause 2* is the duck's nuts

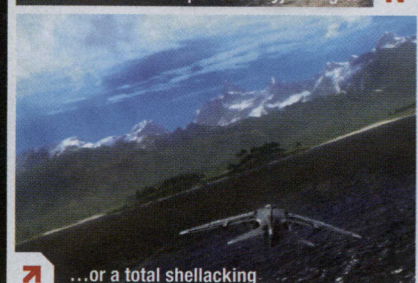
➤ He regrets nothing



➤ "I see plenty of jungle, but I see no fun and games. I have been lied too. In song"



Ripe for a skyjacking... ➤



➤ ...or a total shellacking





You can dangle below choppers, or perch yourself on the nose to shoot the occupants. **Natch**

“The excitement you can have in it is **only limited by your imagination.** Seriously”

doesn't relate to the aforementioned stripper zeppelin in any way. We think.

The vehicles have seen a great deal of enhancement too, both in the sheer number of transports you can commandeer and in the way they handle individually. Ground surfaces now have a larger influence on how your cars handle (pro tip: while a sports car absolutely hunts on bitumen, it'll handle like a concussed figure skater when taken off-road). There is also a real-time deformation system and moving parts

that can be blasted loose from vehicles, which is always appreciated.

Thanks to *Just Cause 2*'s generous checkpoint system and refreshingly brazen approach to gunplay, the excitement you have in it is only limited by your imagination. Seriously. Say you need to infiltrate an enemy base. Most games would have you scout the guard patterns and employ some sort of stealth – *Just Cause 2* wants you to play it like Bogart. For example: we destroyed an entire military compound by strapping C4 to a boat and jumping it from the shore through their front gates. Mid-jump, we exited our improvised missile by grappling to a nearby fighter jet taking off. We then detonated the boat below, killed all the baddies and promptly went looking for a bridge to do a 'victory buzz' past. Underneath it and upside down, of course.

With all this zaniness afoot it's great to know that Avalanche has built-in a video capture feature that allows us to record clips of our greatest in-game exploits and export them. By activating *Just Cause 2*'s video capture feature, the game will automatically record the last 30 seconds of gameplay directly to the PlayStation 3's hard drive or upload to YouTube. Also available from the in-game menu is a 10 minute capture feature which should make for some hilarious machinima presentations.

At the end of the day there are only a few things that hold *Just Cause 2* back from true greatness. The biggest disappointment by far is the absence of multiplayer – either co-op or adversarial, which might well be impossible to implement due to the expansive nature of the game. We also found issue with the games adaptive difficulty that is supposed to gently

scale the difficulty up as the game progresses. Sounds wonderful in theory, but not when towards the end this scale suddenly ratchets up to 'frustrating'. When your Heat level is high in the third act you'll have enemies spawning all around you, which isn't cool.

However, none of these shortcomings can stand in the way of the immense amount of fun that *Just Cause 2* can generate. If you were soured towards the franchise thanks to *Just Cause*'s variety of glitches, repetition and a half-baked control scheme; you should totally give this franchise a second chance. Not only has Avalanche solved these problems, it has crafted one of the most exciting and entertaining open-world romps we've experienced in years. Plus; stripper zeppelin. **Adam Mathew**

## FINAL SAY:

### PRESENTATION

Postcard-perfect Panau is beautiful, brilliant effects and explosions frame rate is silky smooth.

### SOUND

Gunfire and the crunching explosions are perfect. Voice acting...yyyeh not so much. It's horrible.

### CONTROLS

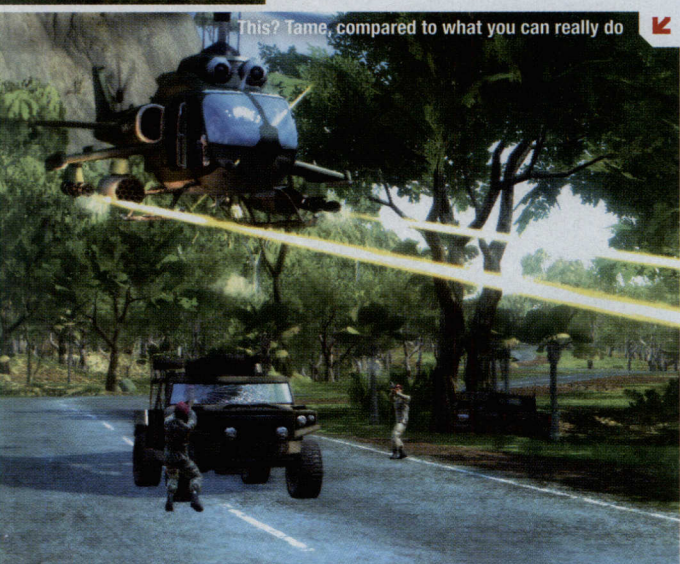
Features an excellent hybrid aiming system and great driving physics.

### REPLAY VALUE

We spent a week happily mucking around before we played a single mission.

**VERDICT:** Great when played as intended, but the emergent gameplay possibilities make this truly awesome.

**9**

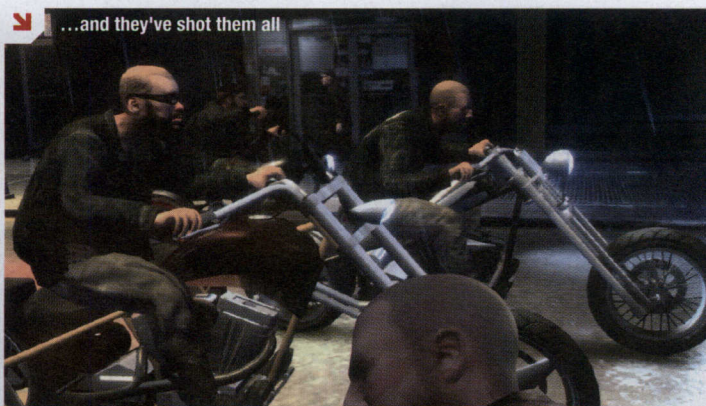


This? Tame, compared to what you can really do





They've seen a million faces...



...and they've shot them all



“The whole package is beautifully balanced, offering **something new**, yet **very familiar** at the same time”



Intensive training



## WORSE THAN

THE INEVITABLE?

## BETTER THAN

GTAV

PlayStation  
Official Magazine - Australia  
**SILVER  
AWARD**

## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** ACTION | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** ROCKSTAR  
**DEVELOPER:** ROCKSTAR NORTH | **PLAYERS:** 1 - 16 | **RRP:** \$69.95

# GTA: EPISODES FROM LIBERTY CITY

Just when you thought you were out

**F**act: *GTAIV* is one of the most important and entertaining videogames of the last decade. It didn't just deliver on expectations, it re-invented what videogames were about and what they could do. Powered by stunning technology, *GTAIV*'s not just shoot-outs and car chases; it was about relationships with other characters and the city itself. It was about developing them at a pace that suited you, the player, and whether you wanted to be guided or if you just wanted to screw around and cause mayhem. The story was rich with NPCs who had emotions and demands, and it was the relationships with these people that made the game so spellbinding.

Rockstar knows it, and *Episodes from Liberty City* gives more of that, while expanding on the story, explaining key scenes and expanding upon some incidental moments. It's been out on Xbox 360 for way too long, but we're stoked it's finally made its way to the PS3. The whole package is beautifully balanced, offering something new, yet very familiar at the same time, adding to the Liberty City experience.

Niko's story is done, wrapped up at the end of *GTAIV* in a thrilling chase finale. His roles in *The Lost and Damned* and *The Ballad of Gay Tony*, the two chapters here, are often blink-and-you'll-miss-them. The moments where Niko is involved with will be familiar to veterans of the series; some are little more than interesting coincidences, others are key to the story.

These follow up chapters explain a few things, like what happened to the diamonds, and also the identity of gunman who held up Niko in the museum. The stories in each overlap, showing the perspective of the new protagonists as the games pan out.

While Niko Bellic was a blank canvas in the *GTAIV* universe, albeit with an agenda, you mostly had to start fresh by building contacts and exploring the city. In both *The Lost and Damned* and *The Ballad of Gay Tony* your familiarity with the landscape is crucial to getting on with the story, so there isn't really a tutorial – why would you need it? You land with a stacked phonebook, a place to hang out, and a whole bunch of new vehicles and radio stations to become familiar with.

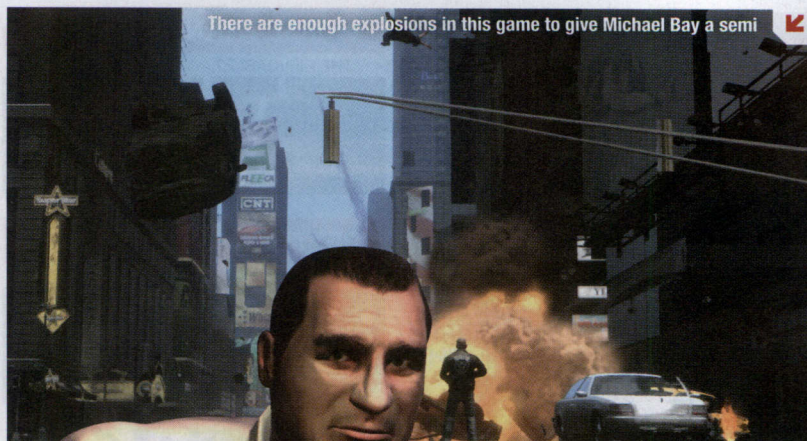
New weapons, too, though they're generally unlocked later on.

In *The Lost and Damned*, rebel biker Billy Grey is out from rehab to find his gang, The Lost, under the stable control of Johnny Klebitz. Johnny's calmed the group down, making peace with rivals gangs – in particular the Angels of Death – so that their narcotics and gun-running business can run more smoothly. Billy, a true psychopath, isn't so impressed, preferring the might of his weapons to actual negotiations. Johnny, ever faithful to the gang, has little choice but to try and keep up while keeping his skin.

A rift between these two headstrong characters soon threatens to destroy the (relatively) good thing they have going, and while Billy is mentally unstable and still plagued with a substance abuse problem he's also hugely entertaining to watch and listen to. Johnny is less so, but the interactions between he and rest of The Lost are still of the quality you'd expect from Rockstar.

The majority of your time is spent on two wheels, and Johnny has his own custom Hexer

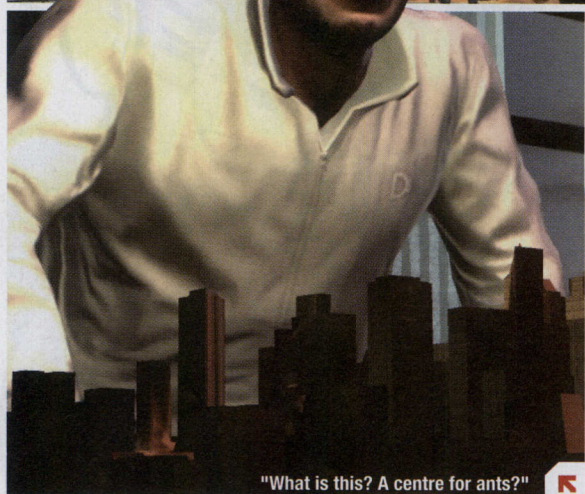




There are enough explosions in this game to give Michael Bay a semi



"I'm raising my hands into the air to illustrate how little I care"



"What is this? A centre for ants?"



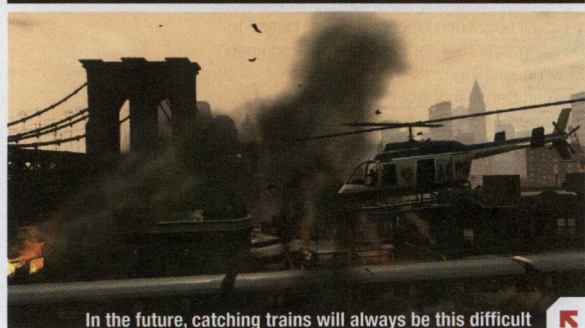
Twice as cool as it looks



Why you should always check your blind spot for motorcycles...



Blowing up a massive yacht with a chopper. Best thing ever



In the future, catching trains will always be this difficult

that can't found anywhere else on the roads. Lose it, either by forgetting where you parked it or having it destroyed, and one will thankfully reappear back at The Lost's clubhouse.

Since the core of *TLAD* is bike culture there are many moments where you're tasked with riding in a formation by following or sticking to a floating logo of the club on the road, as well as racing your fellow members back to the clubhouse or to the next objective. Doing so unlocks new conversations with the rest of The Lost, and cruising down the highway with four or five other burly blokes on bikes is just so rewarding. Their conversations add much to the atmosphere, and it would feel like a more hollow experience without them.

There are a few technical problems with riding in formation, as the gang sticks to the pattern fairly stiffly and will sometime clip lampposts and other stationary objects. We noticed some warping when one bike was trailing due to a prang with a car, then was suddenly back behind us. It's not game breaking but it does detract from the atmosphere.

Apart from the bikes, gameplay is familiar here, with a few tweaks and welcome additions to the formula. Longer missions have checkpoints in the middle of them, so if you bugger it up you're not going to go right back to the start. Sadly, this wonderful mechanic isn't retrofitted to the rest of the game. There's also a light RPG aspect to it, as the more you engage in gunfights with your crew, the more proficient they'll be in a firefight. Lose them in a bloody battle and a plaque commemorating their service will be back on the clubhouse wall.

The Lost's den is also more than just a place to sleep and save. Other gang members

hang out there on the (interactive) pool table, or walk past the (playable) arcade machine on their way to the (money-making) card table or arm wrestling. It, and many of the missions, are in places you probably wouldn't have spent much time during *GTAIV* – so, while there aren't any new islands or hidden suburbs to explore, Liberty City still feels fresh. Other new vehicles and radio stations, perfectly suited to fit in with the biker theme, reinforce the city's evergreen nature. Every time Bon Jovi's 'Wanted: Dead Or Alive' comes on, it feels serendipitous and empowering.

Structurally, however, you do the same thing you did back in 2008. Driving from point-to-point, engaging in tense firefights, and the occasional on-rails shootout. Not that that's a bad thing – it felt great then, it feels great now. There are some memorable missions that pay homage to great movies and the increased firepower adds some variety. *TLAD*, then, is a natural extension of the main game, and any disappointment you feel by 'more of the same' should be thoroughly be quelled by *The Ballad Of Gay Tony*.

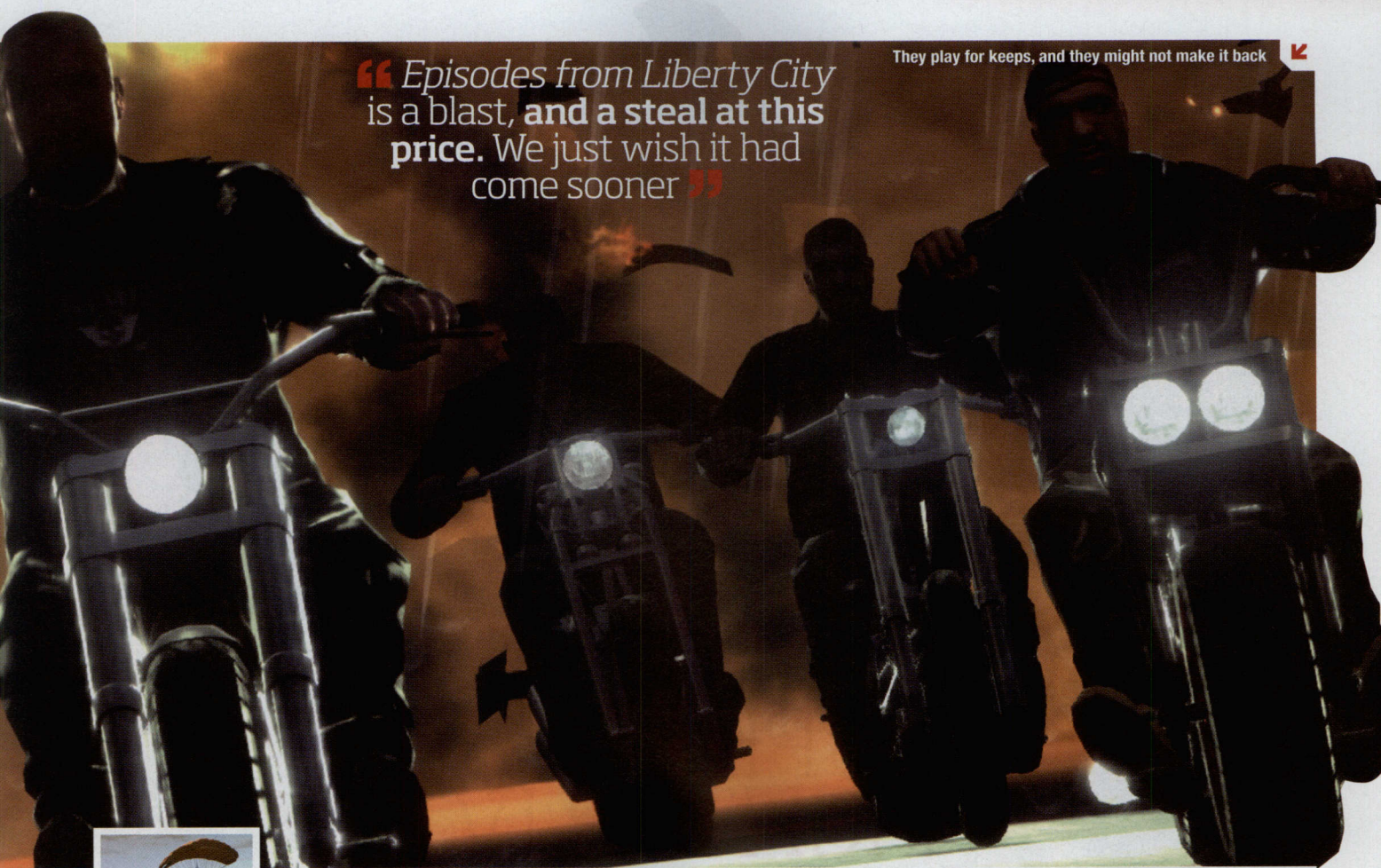
If *TLAD* was about rolling with your crew, then *TBOGT* is what it's like to be a one-man army, albeit with some periphery help. Luis Lopez is the (heterosexual) right-hand man to Liberty City's (homosexual) self-professed king of the nightclub scene, Tony Prince, a pills and booze-addled drama queen. They live the high-life, a far cry from the down and dirty environment that Johnny and Niko suffer.

Although he's under Tony's wing, Luis is still saddled by the past he's trying to escape from, or at least keep from dragging him back under and to jail. His friends in the old neighbourhood are lowlifes, and his mother is simultaneously



“Episodes from Liberty City is a blast, and a steal at this price. We just wish it had come sooner”

They play for keeps, and they might not make it back



### AN UPDATED GUIDE TO HOW YOU'LL SPEND YOUR TIME IN LIBERTY CITY

20% PARACHUTING

15% PARTYING

20% ENGAGING IN FIST FIGHTS

10% PLAYING GOLF

10% GAMBLING

10% STEALING MILITARY HARDWARE

15% BEING LEADER OF THE PACK

demanding and naïve. Charming when he needs to be, he's also unafraid to use violence when he needs to, or when he wants.

*TBOGT*, simply, is crazy. It harks back to the wild days of *San Andreas*, as you'll go BASE jumping, handle some of the most insanely over-powered weaponry seen in a *GTA* game, and drive a tank. Then there's Yusuf Amir, the oversexed billionaire with the mental age of a 15-year-old. Voiced by Iranian-British comedian Omid Djalili, he is the star

of *TBOGT*, and is given the best lines in the script. His missions are usually the most crazy, empowering you with a helicopter that rains death via a minigun and rockets strapped to the bottom of it, and also helping him steal a subway car which is then airlifted off the tracks.

Brucie's brother Mori is the other new character, and his interactions with Brucie explain a lot of the 'roid-freak's behaviour. Another wannabe psycho, he's a miserable being, and Rockstar again show how masterful they are at evoking so much emotion out of players. There's intensity in the missions, too: at one point Mori gets Luis, Brucie and himself into some red-hot supercars, calls the cops and embarks on a chase across an island or so of the city. Taking cues you're your favourite action-movie chase sequences it's exhausting and thrilling, and that adequately describes the rest of *TBOGT*.

It's fairly easy to be caught up in some of the mini-games here, too. Managing a nightclub, or showing off your dance moves to try and bed the ladies is a diversion that could eat up more hours than you assign to it, and there's also a cage fighting arena in Luis's old neighbourhood. Sex, violence and hedonism are the major themes, translated into a game, and the ending is quite upbeat, marking an end to the adventures in Liberty City.

There's also a bundle of new multiplayer modes specific to each game. *TLAD*'s modes capitalise on the use of motorbikes (there's even a *Road Rash* inspired race mode but the best of these is Chopper versus Chopper, which pits a helicopter against a motorbike), while *TBOGT*'s incorporates the parachutes into a race from the top of a building to a car

and through checkpoints in the city. We'll go into these more next month.

*Episodes from Liberty City* is more than an addendum or a cash-in capitalising on the *GTA* name, and it's totally clear to see that this trio have been crafted together. Clocking both episodes will take you less time than if you played *GTAIV* from start to finish – but *Episodes from Liberty City* is a blast, and a steal at this price. An essential purchase for *GTA* lovers. We just wish it had come sooner. **Paul Taylor**

## FINAL SAY:

### PRESENTATION

Superbly cinematic and believable animations, despite the occasional glitch here and there.

### SOUND

An expanded soundtrack, fantastic voice acting, and the hefty boom of an automatic shotgun.

### CONTROLS

You know *GTAIV*, right? Tweaked bike controls and mid-mission checkpoints all make sense.

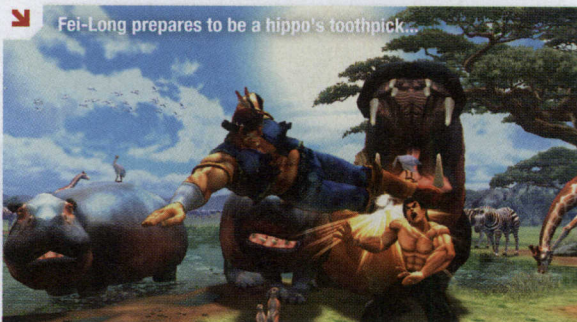
### REPLAY VALUE

If you appreciate a fine story and like multiplayer there's enough here to keep you going for the rest of the year.

**VERDICT:** An essential companion to *GTAIV*. Without it, you're missing out on the full story and awesome multiplayer.

9





Fei-Long prepares to be a hippo's toothpick...



Taking a shower: you're doing it wrong



...then punched in the sternum...



...before flambéing his leg

## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: FIGHTING | RELEASE: APRIL 29 | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM | PLAYERS: 1-2 | RRP: \$79.95

# SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

Can this sequel prove the old axiom?

Hakan is just one of 10 additional characters in this sequel; two new and eight returning 'favourites'. The familiar faces come in the form of T.Hawk, Dee Jay (from *Super Street Fighter II*), Adon, Guy, Cody (from the *Alpha* series) and Ibuki, Makoto and Dudley (*Street Fighter III* series). Along with these nostalgia hits it's also great to see that all the pre-existing *Street Fighter IV* characters score new costumes and pre-fight 'rival cutscenes' too.

The newly introduced characters are Juri the Korean Tae Kwon Do exponent and the aforementioned Hakan. Juri is an offensively oriented, mostly kick-based fighter whose accessible techniques include a charge fireball (think Balrog's Turn Punch motion) and a pinwheel kick (think a Flash/Spinning Bird Kick). Hakan revolves around the application of oil to his body. When he is 'dry' he still maintains a slippery body and the same movesets, but when he applies oil he gets more potent slide attacks and a crazy long range for his command throw. Application of oil makes him "glow" for a short amount of time, acting as a timer of sorts – that being the case, his regular attacks are designed to keep enemies at a distance. If you'll excuse the pun, he's very slick and a very worthy addition.

Every character (old or new) can now select from two distinct Ultra Combos that are much more cinematic than any you've seen before. A lot of these are useful for specific match-ups. Blanka, for example, has a new 2-in-1 Ultra, with one version that is useful for countering full-screen fireballs and the other serving as a sneaky anti-cross-up/anti-air technique.

These powerful new attacks – along with

some much needed tweaks to a few regular and super moves – add a massive amount of strategic nuance and mix up a lot of the match-ups. You also get a streamlined multiplayer lobby (where you can spectate or play solo while waiting), saveable replays and the return of bonus stages (i.e. belting barrels and cars). For its price, *Super Street Fighter IV* features a lion's share of new content. Grease up and grab it today. **Adam Mathew**

## FINAL SAY:

### PRESENTATION

New ultras go crazy-overboard with the cinematics. Faultless animations throughout.

### SOUND

That eunuch singing at the title screen is gone. Everything else is as it should be.

### CONTROLS

It's hard to improve upon perfection. This is super tight as per usual.

### REPLAY VALUE

35 characters to learn (or re-learn). Bonus Stages return and a streamlined multiplayer.

## VERDICT:

Amazing value for money. This isn't so much *SF5* as it is *'Street Fighter 4.9'*.

# 10

PlayStation  
Official Magazine - Australia  
**GOLD  
AWARD**

Oh Capcom, why do you mock us? Rather than introduce a patently awesome wrestler into your *Street Fighter* canon (like almighty Mike Haggar), you borrow his design and tweak it into a completely different wrestler (and 'different' is certainly the term to use). Hakan the turquoise-haired perpetually sunburnt Turkish oil wrestler might well be one of the weirdest looking *Street Fighter* creations to date. Fortunately, he is also one of the most entertaining.

### HAGGARIST

We've spoken to Streets producer, Yoshinori Ono, about Haggar making a comeback. "Perhaps in the future," he said, in between him laughing at us. We haven't stopped dreaming.



In space, no-one can hear you recite clichéd movie catchphrases



“It almost feels like a cutesy, angst-ridden version of *Star Trek*”

## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: RPG | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT | DEVELOPER: TRI-ACE | PLAYERS: 1 | RRP: \$109.95

# STAR OCEAN: THE LAST HOPE

Perhaps try a Pulsar Lake instead

After a veritable ocean of time has passed (*Star Ocean: The Last Hope* was released exactly one year ago on 360), Square Enix has finally decided to get around to giving us a taste of this legendary JRPG. Sporting the new suffix 'International' this version of the game contains both Japanese and English voices as well as new content. Sounds radsauce in theory; but is it a case of too little, too late?

Technically, *The Last Hope* serves as the fourth instalment in the *Star Ocean* series but the plot takes place a few centuries before the original *Star Ocean* (around 2097 AD). This latest iteration features much more of a sci-fi emphasis than previous titles in the series, thanks to the ability to control your own ship. Honestly, it almost feels like a cutesy, angst-ridden version of *Star Trek*, thanks to the clichéd melodramatic cast and the ability to planet hop.

*The Last Hope* utilizes the same real-time battle system as its predecessors, but there are also new techniques called Rush Gauges and Blindsides. The Rush gauge lets you perform a pre-emptive strike against your enemies thanks to each character in your four person team having their own individual Rush attacks. Blindsides let you counter attack an enemy who is targeting you by slipping out of their line of sight and launching a sneak attack from behind. There is also a solid (yet wanky sounding) fighting system that is rather appropriately named BEAT (Battle Exalted Action Type). Through it you can set a preferred type of fight style for your team members, be it offence,

defence, sneak attacks, etc. All in all, the encounters are more action-packed than your average JRPG and the battle system is easily the best part of this game.

Which, of course, leads us to what isn't so hot about *The Last Hope*. The story features great, yawning chasms of non-interactive cutscenes and, thanks to an abundant lack of save points, you can find yourself having to re-watch them if you cock up. The story itself isn't anything to Twitter about either, thanks to shallow, uninteresting characters who deliver fairly awkward dialogue.

But despite the bland storyline there's no denying that *Star Ocean: The Last Hope* excels in other areas, most notably with its intense and satisfying combat system and a lively and engaging level progression which gives the proceedings a good pace. While certainly not a classic, this JRPG is fun enough and shouldn't disappoint Japanophiles. **Adam Mathew**



## OCEANOLOGY

*The Last Hope* is the seventh *Star Ocean* game to be released, the fifth to be released on a PlayStation platform, and the first time it's on the PS3. The series has had two remakes, and this is a prequel to the entire saga which began in 1996. Confused yet?

## FINAL SAY:

## PRESENTATION

Up-beat, colourful sci-fi visuals are a welcome change, though the framerate can suffer at intense moments.

## SOUND

English voice acting is horrendous, the Japanese option less so. This won't save you from the script though.

## CONTROLS

The real-time combat system is intuitive.

## REPLAY VALUE

There are heaps of places to go, people to meet, stuff to build, enemies to kill, skills to learn and sights to see.

**VERDICT:** Worth beaming up for the addictive, strategic combat system. The story meanders, though.

# 7



## INFO

**FORMAT:** PS3 | **GENRE:** RACING | **RELEASE:** NOW | **DISTRIBUTOR:** THQ  
**DEVELOPER:** MONUMENTAL GAMES | **PLAYERS:** 1-20 | **RRP:** \$109.95

# MOTOGP 09/10

'Balls on the road' motor sports racing returns

The MotoGP franchise (or 'franchises', as the license got passed around by multiple developers across multiple systems) has witnessed only a few chequered flags in its equally chequered history. Relative newcomer Monumental Games has thrown its leg over the challenge and taken off in a new direction; it has attempted to create a more accessible motorbike game that still rewards racing with skill on the track.

The meat and potatoes of *MotoGP 09/10* is the Career Mode which involves competing and hiring engineers, team managers and press officers to ultimately win the MotoGP World Championship. Riding stylishly on the track through overtaking, clean sections, slipstreaming and showboating rewards you with Rider Reputation points. Conversely, pushing too hard will just make you look like a tosser, as collisions and crashes will slash the reputation bonus at the end of each race. As you earn more Rep you'll become more attractive to bike manufacturers, sponsors and employees (and also to the grid girls too, presumably).

A different slant on your standard career mode is all well and good, but how does it handle when you open the throttle? Frankly, it's a touch wobbly. To keep the racing as

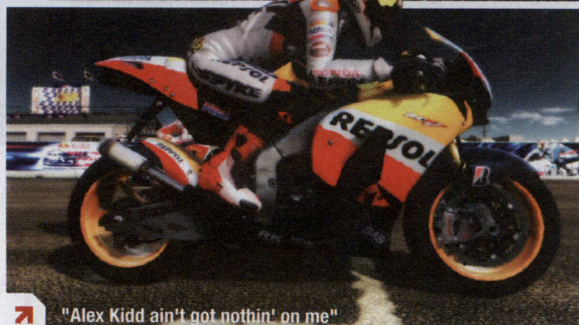
visceral as possible, *MotoGP 09/10* has the bikes cornering like radical jet skis and there's a 'tuck-in' feature that is basically an unauthentic 'turbo boost' mechanic. Hardcore bikers may also lament some of the RPG design decisions that are found in the Rep Points system. Getting rewarded for riding well makes utter sense, but to be shafted out of additional Rep because you're intelligent enough to not try wheelies, taunts and power slides seems a little harsh. On the other hand, such arcade diversions will definitely keep the more casual, 'Super Hang On' crowd from falling asleep at the handlebars.

It really seems as though Monumental Games focused more on flashy presentation and cheap thrills rather than handling and physics with any true depth. That said, it is a much more fun and accessible racing game that will attract new fans without hitting them over the head with a super-hard technicality. *MotoGP 09/10* stands as the antithesis of racing sims like *SBK-08 Superbike* whose superior track-side feel was marred by barebones presentation. There's eye candy and pizzazz here now, but it comes at the expense of handling purity. This is good enough for curious thrill seekers, but the simulation freaks may want to veer well away.

Adam Mathew



↗ Pictured: steel horse



↗ "Alex Kidd ain't got nothin' on me"



Winning a race: you're doing it wrong ↘



Not pictured: the world's gutsiest camera operator ↘

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

Like Formula 1, MotoGP as a sport is going through a few refinements and tweaks. Only a few years ago, the MotoGP class was a hodge podge of 500cc and 900cc bikes. The larger ones completed smashed the lower displacement bikes. Even though the maximum size of a bike engine is now 800cc – that's probably less than half the size of your car's engine – the highest speed achieved on a MotoGP bike is a touch over 349km/h. Insane.

## ↗ A racetrack, in the rain, yesterday



## FINAL SAY:

### PRESENTATION

Not much detail on the riders, and textures are a touch muddy. Great speed though.

### SOUND

The throaty whine of these super bikes should thoroughly entertain your ears while pissing off your neighbours.

### CONTROLS

Handles like fake breasts; tight enough but, ultimately, artificial and odd. The concept of the 'tuck in' mechanic will infuriate the hardcore.

### REPLAY VALUE

There's Arcade mode to tinker with and plenty of celebs to (eventually) unlock in the Career mode.

**VERDICT:** There really is no way to please both the simmers and the casuals. This leans to the latter in a big way.

6



## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: JRPG | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY  
DEVELOPER: LEVEL-5 | PLAYERS: 1-4 | RRP: \$109.95

# WHITE KNIGHT CHRONICLES

He don't feel so bright

There's been a relative glut of JRPGs to hit lately – *FFXIII*, *Resonance of Fate*, *Star Ocean: The Last Hope* and even *Yakuza 3* – each with their own riff on the genre, so *White Knight Chronicles* had a task ahead of it to be noticed and gain traction in punters' PS3s. Level-5 has made some of the most well-known, if not popular, role-players in videogame history like *Dark Cloud* and *Dragon Quest VIII*, but this MMO-cum-RPG belies their reputation.

Shortly put, it's not that good. It feels and looks generic, from the plain graphics to the storyline, and *White Knight* doesn't feel like a worthwhile way to spend 30-or-so hours. The battle system is mostly sound: you have a selection of actions that are displayed at the bottom of the screen, and picking them in battle is done via the d-pad. You can then

make that string into a combo to fight just how you want to, and the order of the icons are organised in a totally customisable, switching between spells and physical attacks.

Once you have the White Knight, which is a transformation of one of your characters, strategy can largely be forgotten as battles become pretty easy and boss fights need the alter egos active to be completed. You can go online and play with your mates, but it doesn't do enough to be exciting or even pretty to look at. Diagnosis: take one dose of *Final Fantasy XIII* and start another of *Valkyria Chronicles*.

Paul Taylor



"Feel the force of my B.O!"



None of these people are white, or look like a knight

## FINAL SAY:

### PRESENTATION

Boring story, so-so graphics and lip-synching from 2004. The choices for character design at the start are pretty good, though.

### SOUND

A rousing orchestral score that'll fill you with hope, and the voice acting's solid enough.

### CONTROLS

Battles are pretty easy to mash through once you have the White Knight, and some spells don't feel effective.

### REPLAY VALUE

Low. Although online play has potential it's doubtful you're going to be enriched by this.

**VERDICT** If you and a like-minded mate are starved for a JRPG to grind through, give this a go. Else, don't.

6

## INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: MUSIC | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: MINDSCAPE | DEVELOPER: KONAMI | PLAYERS: 1 | RRP: \$69.95

# KARAOKE REVOLUTION

We're singing in the game

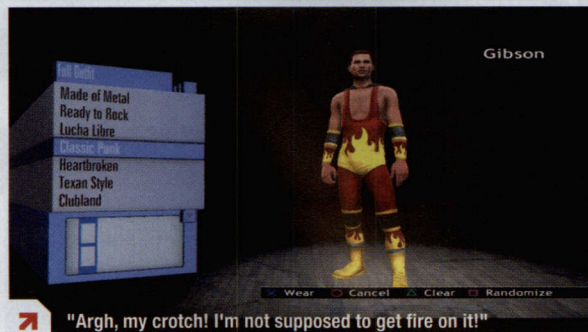
Full disclosure: we used to be totally addicted to *SingStar*. We're not proud of it, it just happened. *SingStar* gave us a watertight excuse to sing songs we enjoyed outside of the shower, or the car (on the freeway, when you've got no passengers).

And then *Rock Band* happened. Suddenly, we could sing better music – and three other people could join in. Plus, drums. You could play them. We dropped *SingStar* like a cold pie.

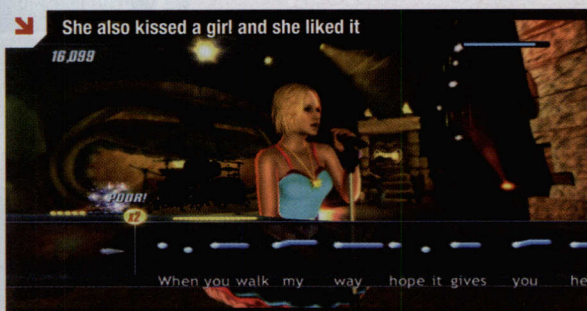
Does *Karaoke Revolution* have anything to bring us back to a singing game we can't also drum to? Not especially, even though it's decent enough.

Like every singing game since the dawn of man, *Karaoke Revolution* is simply about picking a track and bellowing the lyrics into a mic in exchange for points. Sing well enough and you'll snare Star Boosts – multipliers. The only difference we can see here is that there's no maximum multiplier, so assuming you don't sound like a stabbed cat you should be able to put on some massive scores.

You can create your own character and customise your stage, or you can replace all



"Argh, my crotch! I'm not supposed to get fire on it!"



## FINAL SAY:

### PRESENTATION

Not great. Far too many boring, purely functional menus, and the performers look quite rubbish.

### SOUND

Master tracks used, which is all you can ask for really.

### CONTROLS

Won't be unfamiliar if you've ever played a karaoke game before.

### REPLAY VALUE

The 50-song tracklist is pretty eclectic, so it's unlikely you'll like everything here, but DLC will pad things out.

### VERDICT

Decent enough for a singing game, but only for those who dislike drumming and love Rod Stewart.

7



## ESSENTIAL DOWNLOADS

Download this...

### Dragon Age Origins: Awakenings DLC



A massive expansion to an excellent adventure, with a brand new campaign, specialisations and abilities. For the hardcore.

### Shift: Exotic Racing Series DLC



For the same amount as GRID, you get seven cars and four tracks using one of the best racing engines around.

### Split/Second Shipyard Trailer



This snippet shows off more environmental destructive possibilities as you push your car to the limit. This looks awesome.

### RE5 Untold Stories Bundle



Two chapters that add on to the African adventure: Lost in Nightmares and Desperate Escape, plus costumes. A bargain.

### BioShock 2 DLC



Despite it unlocking content on the disc rather than a download, it's good value for those under Rapture's multiplayer spell.

DLC

## BORDERLANDS: THE SECRET ARMORY OF GENERAL KNOXX DLC

Caution: extreme fun ahead

It's a fact: *Borderlands* is ace. It's been well supported since its release last year, with one great extension and one that was flawed but offered something a little bit different to the formula. *General Knoxx*, however, puts it back into your PS3 over more recent releases.

*General Knoxx* does what *Borderlands* does so well: immersing you in the giggle-fest narrative rather than being a straight-up shooting gallery. The invading Atlas corporation has General Knoxx taking its orders, whilst his adversary, Athena, is the ointment. You're the focal point of the story, rather than being someone caught up in an existing struggle like the main game.

This means there's a journey to be undertaken back on Pandora, and around that Gearbox have added new enemies, new vehicles and, thankfully, raised the level cap from 50 to 61. Getting to the new cap is going to take a while, as the amounts of XP you need to fill each level is astronomical.

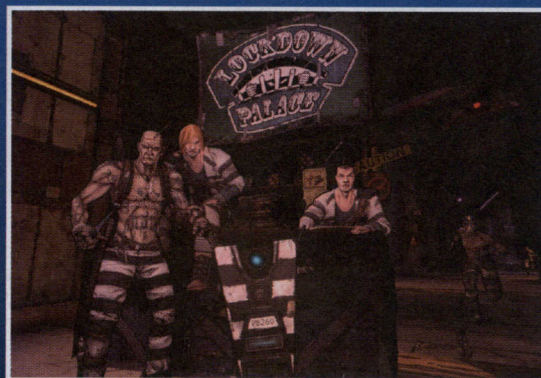


Getting you there, though, are new enemies. Lance Assassins – sexy ninjas – are the first to appear, and after that there are sound riffs on familiar loons which will require adjusting your tactics. Just watch out for the midgets in chests.

New vehicles have been added. Our favourite is the Lancer which offers a nice variety of weapons for four occupants. Variety is probably the best word to sum up *General Knoxx*, but it's also funny, satirical and essential. Prepare to lose a few weekends with this, and many more if Gearbox can keep the good stuff coming. **A Paul Taylor**

INFO

GENRE: SHOOTER  
RELEASE: NOW  
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K  
DEVELOPER: GEARBOX  
PLAYERS: 1-4  
RRP: \$11.45



#### VERDICT:

The best piece of DLC so far for *Borderlands*. It gives more of what you expect – enemies, levels, vehicles – but also does it better than you'd anticipate. It's a must buy.

DLC

## GRID: PRESTIGE PACK DLC

Mount Panarama returns!

INFO

GENRE: RACING  
RELEASE: NOW  
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS  
DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS  
PLAYERS: 1-8  
RRP: \$15.95

Agas ago, we thought we were going to get a full V8 Supercars bundle to bolt on to the robust if arcadey *GRID* chassis. It never happened and, unless AVESCO and Codies can sort it out, nor will it. Entering out of pit straight is a substitute of sorts: the mighty Bathurst track. Still, no Supercars, but there are super cars here.

You get the bombastic Veyron, a new Lambo, a couple of Ferraris and six more. They all look the part, but the handling is showing its age. It's great that the game's being supported this long after release, but there are better racers – such as *SHIFT* – to devote time and money to. **A Paul Taylor**



#### VERDICT:

Not worth the money, unfortunately. If it were below \$10 we'd give it a cautious recommendation for curiosity's sake, but as it is you can leave this one be.



DLC

# FIFA 2010 ULTIMATE TEAM DLC

Fantasy football's back on the cards

## INFO

GENRE: SPORTS  
RELEASE: NOW  
DISTRIBUTOR: EA  
DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS  
PLAYERS: 1-20  
RRP: \$8.95

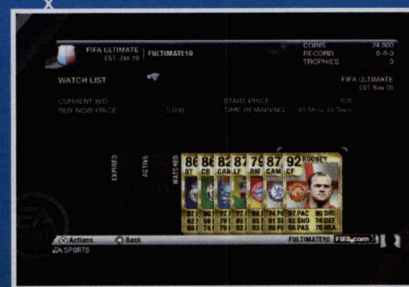
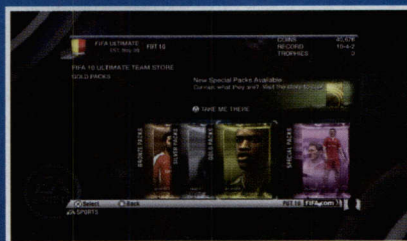
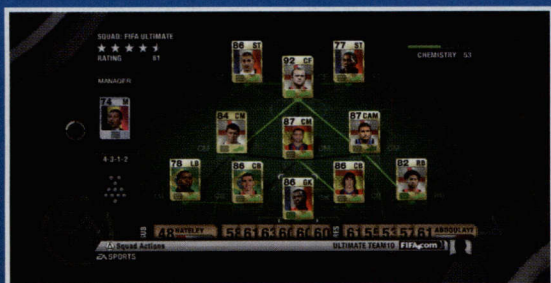
Like a holy union between cocoa and crack, EA's new DLC for its footballing burger-with-the-lot merges card nerding and eBay-style player trading to create a fantasy mode with schoolyard chutzpah.

The basic gist is that players create their own clubs from randomised packs of digital trading cards. Most cards represent club footballers from around the world, but some feature coaching perks, staff members, and a variety of uniforms. If players want to expand their motley deck of ankle breakers they can

enter them into tournaments and earn "coins" (the game's currency) to buy additional bronze and silver packs, fork out real money (just over \$1 each) for the optional gold packs featuring better players, or do the cheeky bugger and buy, say, Frank Lampard off some fat-cheeked FIFA addict online who has the Chelsea mastermind in doubles.

It's trading cards for the gaming age! Unlike the fad of the '90s, Ultimate Team lets players do something with their collection – take to the field to see their dream line-up play. Granted Ultimate Team doesn't change the on-field experience of the game – it plays

as beautifully as it always has – but it does offer a new motivation for winning. And for only eight bucks and change we suggest those who've ever suffered from collect-ania strap up their laces. **B James Ellis**



## VERDICT:

A surprisingly deep chunk of downloadable glee. *FIFA 10: Ultimate Team* will have you looting talent like a playground bookie. Too bad it doesn't actually come with any gum.

## MULTIPLAYER

# BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

It's 'bad' as in 'bloody awesome'

## INFO

GENRE: SHOOTER  
RELEASE: NOW  
DISTRIBUTOR: EA  
DEVELOPER: DICE  
PLAYERS: 1-24  
RRP: \$109.95

There are two camps, each with a war-themed shooter at war against one another: *Modern Warfare 2* and *Bad Company 2*. Despite the theme, each does things a little differently whilst being mammoth in their scope. Unless you're a recluse with a benefactor to pay your bills it's hard to justify spending equal amounts of time with both, and why would you switch camps when you're well on the way to earning the elusive Prestige status?

A few reasons, and not just because the game's sold more than two million copies in the first couple of weeks of it being on sale. You'll never be short of a match. *Bad Company 2* is so fluid, from the way you get into a match, to the roles you play and how



you play. Having the destructible scenery makes you continuously rethink how you approach a situation, while vehicles threaten to turn it into a sandbox experience.

Like the main game, the sound design is sheer bliss, and more than compensates for the slightly-off graphics. If you never thought you'd sit on the other side of the fence, think again. The way you spend your time online just got more complicated. **B Paul Taylor**

## VERDICT:

Nigh on peerless, except for *Modern Warfare 2* of course. If you're looking for something new, or the lag is too much to bear, welcome home.

# BEST GAMES TO PLAY ONLINE

Enemy AI making you yawn? Feel like conquering the world? Take your skills online with this trio



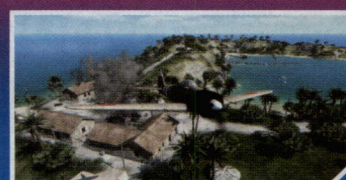
## MODERN WARFARE 2

Once you have a good connection, this is an undisputable gem. It keeps on giving, and the pool of quality players keeps growing.



## COLIN MCRAC DIRT 2

Take it at face value and this is a load of fun. The netcode's robust, and offers arcade thrills with a simple levelling system.



## BATTLEFIELD 1943

Super-addictive and super-easy to drop in to a game. An example of doing things the simple way is sometimes the best.



# GOD OF WAR III

## CHALLENGES OF OLYMPUS

If want to test your skills as Kratos, then the Challenges of Olympus is what you're going to look for. There is a total of seven challenges to attempt – and rest assured they earn their name

### POPULATION CONTROL

This first test should be a piece of cake. The idea is to not allow more than 50 enemies to be in the fight arena at the same time. To do that you need to do what Kratos does best: kill things quickly. We found the best way to do this is by using **□** + **○** on enemies and also by grabbing one of them to use as a battering ram on the rest.

### BARE HANDS

Here's the score: before the time runs out, you must kill all the enemies without using any weapons whatsoever. After much head scratching and dismal failure we figured out that the only way to do this is by grabbing the grunts and using them as battering rams to knock the Cyclopes off the ledge. Trust us, it saves a lot of time.

### GET STONED

Welcome to the hardest challenge! You must allow the Gorgons to turn you into stone 10 times without dying. Take every opportunity to grab a Gorgon to make it glare at you. Then deliberately press the wrong button in the minigame to 'get stoned'. Break free and do it all over again. Rest assured you WILL die a bunch of times thanks to the hordes of annoying enemies that spawn in.

### KNOCKOUT

Score 1000 Points by knocking enemies out of the arena. Simply beat up the big enemy at the start and climb onto him. Hit the spawning enemies using **○** and try to kill the points heavy Wraiths as much as possible (and because they're annoying and need to die). Here's what everything is worth: Sentry = 15 points, Minotaur = 30 Points, Wraith = 60 Points

### HADES KIDS

Cryptic mission requirements: they don't die, they multiply – get five Cyclopes to spawn. This isn't too much hassle to do. We found that the best way to accomplish this is to keep spamming the hell out of the **○**, **○**, **△** combo and to nimbly dodge their attacks by rolling with the right stick. Then you just finish them off when they have a **○** over their head.

### EL MATADOR – OLE

Don't get gored by the Minotaur, don't get piled on by the enemies, huh? The best way to do this is use the **○**, **○**, **△** combo twice at the start to take out the first Minotaur, then simply use **□** + **○** on the other enemies. If there are two or three Minotaurs, simply go to the ledge and roll to make Kratos hang off. Then keep moving left and right (pressing **×** so you don't fall or climb up) and let the Minotaurs charge at you and fall off. Stupid Minotaurs.

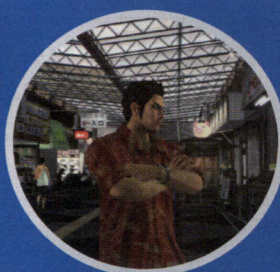
### SIMPLY SMASHING

Destroying all the urns before time runs out is strictly for goofballs. All you need to do is remember where the urns are off screen and to only use single taps of **○** to economically destroy while still allowing yourself to move around the arena quickly. Don't forget that roll function either. There you go, all challenges completed. Roll on some DLC that actually challenges us, we say.



## TROPHY HUNTER

Looking for gold, silver, and bronze in your favourite titles? Here are three to grab in *Yakuza 3*



### WALKING BANK

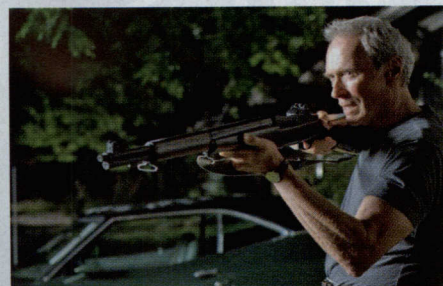
To get this one you must Possess more than 10 million yen. For the earlier chapter in Okinawa, you can rack up a crap load of yen easily by fishing for tuna. You can sell it for 100,000 Yen each at the fish market. How do you do that? Well, we're getting to that...



## 7 THINGS TO DO IN...

# BATTLEFIELD 2


Going to war has never been so much fun. Do more on the field than dodging the artillery that'll turn you into cannon fodder quicker than salmon into sushi



### GET YOUR GRAN TORINO ON

Follow the steps at <http://veteran.battlefield.com> and you will receive Veteran rewards in select *Battlefield* games if you have a Veteran rank of 1 or higher. Get to Veteran rank 2 and you can keep people off your lawn by killing them with a WWII M1 Garand

### TAG! YOU'RE IT!

If you look at an enemy and tap the  button, they show up on radar to the rest of your multiplayer pals. You could save somebody's life that way. Sometimes you can point at a generic hiding spot and tag an enemy you didn't even know was there.



### HARDEN THE F UP

There is a new "Hardcore" mode for any multiplayer gametype that removes all HUD elements, disables the kill camera, and reduces player health by half. It's almost like playing 'Licensed to Kill' from the old *GoldenEye* days.



### QUADTACULAR BIKE

Despite having bugger all armour, the 'Quad Bike' is an absolute blast to get around in. We recommend testing the durability of buildings and people's skeletal structures by jumping it into them. Works better if you have a buddy riding 'actual' shotgun.



### SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE UNMANNED FRIEND!

Not a fan of getting your hands dirty? Kill your enemies from afar and in black and white with the UAV.  launches guided missiles and, if you have the unlock, "Coaxial Machine Gun",  also spews hot lead at people.



### JUST SHOOTIN' THE SHIT WHILE SHOOTIN' SHIT

When you hear the guys start talking about Flynn the chopper pilot, stop and take a listen to the six minute comedy skit that ensues. Topics covered: John Lennon, fishing, mortality, brainwashing and washing your brain.



### AIN'T NO WAY FOR NO SOLDIER TO DIE

Humiliate an enemy sniper by sneaking up, whipping out your repair tool and headshotting them with it. The good news is you'll also unlock a Bronze medal too entitled: The Dentist. Take that, you camping bastard.



### CATCH A TUNA

Get **Bento** or a **Shrimp** bait from the fish vendor in Okinawa Market. Go to the beach and fish. Keep canceling and loading until a fish appears in the 100-150m end of the bar (the fish on offer is randomised, you see). Once it appears, throw your bait out to it and prepare for a grueling battle of man vs. fish.



### RUNAWAY TRAIN

Now here's one of our most favourite pastimes realised in secret PlayStation Trophy form. In order to score this you'll need to 'run over' 100 people. In other words, run through the city streets knocking innocent folks on their arse. You don't need too much instruction on this one; just embrace your inner jerk and run with it.



# INTERMISSION

NEW RELEASES ON DVD & BLU-RAY

## SHERLOCK HOLMES (M)

**DIRECTOR:** GUY RITCHIE | **CAST:** ROBERT DOWNEY, JR., JUDE LAW, RACHEL MCADAMS, MARK STRONG | **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD/BLU-RAY

After finally nicking serial killer and occult 'sorcerer' Lord Blackwood, legendary sleuth Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson can close yet another successful case. But when Blackwood mysteriously returns from the grave and resumes his killing spree, Holmes must take up the hunt once again. Downey, Jr. brings quick-wit, cunning, and bare-knuckle toughness to the role, and the chemistry between him and Law as Watson is perfect. Don't laugh when people tell you it's *Lethal Weapon 2* in Victorian clothes.

### VERDICT:

Who'd have thought *Sherlock Holmes* would be a top-notch buddy-cop action-comedy? We didn't. Great performances and direction. Hugely entertaining.

9

IF YOU  
LIKE THIS  
TRY...

### Lethal Weapon 2

It's *Sherlock Holmes* set in late '80s Los Angeles



## THE BOONDOCK SAINTS II: ALL SAINTS DAY (MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** TROY DUFFY

**CAST:** SEAN PATRICK FLANERY, NORMAN REEDUS, CLIFTON COLLINS, JR., JULIE BENZ, PETER FONDA, BILLY CONNOLLY, JUDD NELSON

**AVAILABLE ON:** DVD/BLU-RAY

Troy Duffy, the writer/director of cult favourite *The Boondock Saints*, finally brings his much-anticipated sequel to viewers. The MacManus brothers (Norman Reedus, Sean Patrick Flanery) have been hiding in Ireland with their father, Il Duce (Billy Connolly), far removed from their former vigilante lives in Boston. But when word comes that a beloved priest has been killed by forces within the mob, the brothers return to Boston to mount a violent and bloody crusade to bring justice to those responsible.

### VERDICT:

A little too over-the-top, and perhaps not worth the 10 year wait, but great fun.

7



## AVATAR (M)

**DIRECTOR:** JAMES CAMERON

**CAST:** SAM WORTHINGTON, ZOE SALDANA, SIGOURNEY WEAVER, STEPHEN LANG, MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ, GIOVANNI RIBISI, JOEL DAVID MOORE, COB POUNDER

**AVAILABLE ON:** DVD/BLU-RAY

It's the movie that every person living within 100 kilometres of a cinema went and saw, judging by the box-office takings. Reviewing it now is probably moot, but no matter. We won't take credit for describing it as multi-million dollar mish-mash of *Star Wars* and *Fern Gully* – but that's an incredibly succinct way of explaining it. The plot itself, while imaginative enough, isn't the real reason to absorb this film. It's the spectacle of special effects that will amaze. People will continue to criticise this film as a triumph of style over substance. What we will say is that after watching *Avatar* we were left feeling the same as we were after watching *T2*, or *Jurassic Park*. That is, how on Earth are they going to make special effects that look better than this?

### VERDICT:

It'll probably suffer a some fast-forwarding on multiple viewings, but it looks incredible.

8



## ZOMBIELAND (MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** RUBEN FLEISCHER

**CAST:** WOODY HARRELSON, JESSE EISENBERG, EMMA STONE, ABIGAIL BRESLIN

**AVAILABLE ON:** DVD/BLU-RAY

This brilliant horror comedy is the story of two men surviving in a world overrun by zombies. Columbus, a nerdy college student, has joined forces with Tallahassee, a zombie-slaying bad-arse whose single determination is to get the last Twinkie on Earth. However, when they link up with Wichita and Little Rock, two young girls who have also found unique ways to survive the zombie apocalypse, they are all forced to determine which is worse: relying on each other or succumbing to the zombies.

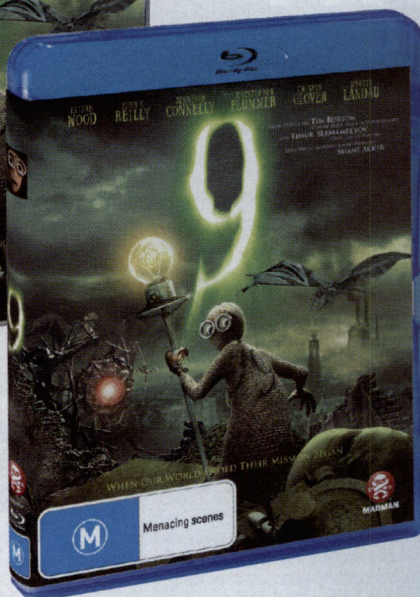
There will no doubt be plenty of comparisons to *Shaun of the Dead*, but this is nothing for *Zombieland* to be ashamed of. It's predicatable, sure, but it's bloody entertaining – and, as far as a US answer to the zombie comedy goes, this is easily the best yet.

### VERDICT:

Destined to become a cult classic, and easily in the same league as *Shaun of the Dead*.

9





WIN!

# LUCKY NUMBER

## WHEN OUR WORLD ENDED, THEIR MISSION BEGAN

From visionary filmmakers Tim Burton (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*) and Timur Bekmambetov (*Wanted*) and Academy Award-nominated director Shane Acker comes this visually stunning and original epic adventure. In the final days of humanity, a dedicated scientist gives the spark of life to nine of his creations. The world has turned into an unrecognisable landscape of machines and spare parts, but this group of nine finds that if they band together, their small community might just be able to change the course of history. Featuring the voice talents of Elijah Wood, John C. Reilly, Jennifer Connelly and Crispin Glover.

Thanks to Madman we've got 10 copies of 9 on DVD and 10 copies of 9 on Blu-ray to give away. Just answer the following question and follow the entry instructions on page 32. 9 is available on DVD and Blu-ray April 10.

**QUESTION: 9 features an all-star voice cast, but who is the last actor you'd ever cast in an animated film and why?**

**DIRECTOR:** SHANE ACKER | **CAST:** ELIJAH WOOD, JOHN C. REILLY, JENNIFER CONNELLY, CRISPIN GLOVER | **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD/BLU-RAY

9 (M)

When 9, a burlap doll, comes to life he finds himself in a post-apocalyptic world where all humans are gone. It's only by chance that he discovers a small community of others like him taking refuge from fearsome machines that roam the earth, intent on their extinction. 9 sets about convincing the others that hiding will do them no good, and that they must take the offensive if they want to survive.

Based on a short film by Shane Acker.

### VERDICT:

Quite remarkable to look at, although the package itself can be a bit clumsy at times. Not exactly for kids, either. Not young ones, at least.

7

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...

### Corpse Bride

Or any of the other weird shit that Tim Burton makes.



# INTERMISSION

NEW RELEASES ON DVD & BLU-RAY

DIRECTORS: VARIOUS | CAST: TREY PARKER, MATT STONE, ISAAC HAYES | AVAILABLE ON: DVD

## SOUTH PARK - THE COMPLETE EIGHTH SEASON (MA15+)



IF YOU  
LIKE THIS  
TRY...

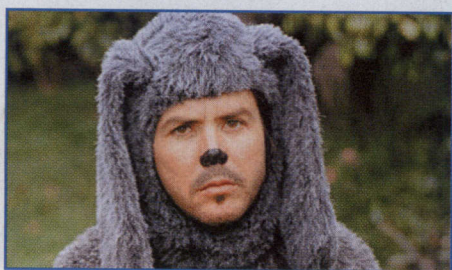
**The Simpsons**  
It did it all first.

Stan, Kyle, Kenny and Cartman find themselves in the middle of hot-button political issues and celebrity shenanigans. In 'The Passion of the Jew' Kyle finally sees Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* and decides Cartman's anti-Semitic claims are true. Meanwhile, Stan and Kenny see the movie and hate it, prompting them to head to Malibu to retrieve their ticket money from Mel Gibson himself, and in 'Stupid Spoiled Where Video Playset' Paris Hilton tries to buy Butters. All that, plus a Christmas episode about the Anti-Christ. All 14 episodes feature on this three-disc set.

### VERDICT:

The eight season of *South Park* really marks the point where the series begins to make use of much more heavy-handed satire, and it works a treat.

8



## WILFRED: THE SECOND SERIES (MA15+)

DIRECTORS: PAUL BERNARD, DAVID MALONEY

CAST: JASON GANN, ADAM ZWAR, CINDY WADDINGHAM, SAMUEL JOHNSON, STEPHEN CURRY, JOSH LAWSON, DAN WYLLIE, KIM GYNGELL

AVAILABLE ON: DVD

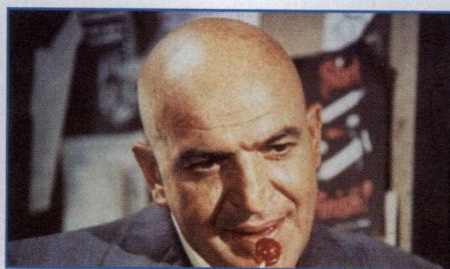
Bear with us for a moment, if you've never seen the man in the dog suit before. Wilfred (Gann) is a dog, and lives with his owner Sarah (Waddingham). From the moment Adam (Zwar) comes into Sarah's life, Wilfred gives Adam a hard time. He's still a dog though, and only appears to be a pot-smoking, nacho-eating, grumpy menace to Adam. Sarah, however, doesn't see it.

It's not so much what happens on *Wilfred* that makes it so painfully funny, but how. Like the first series, it's all about the chemistry between the characters though a few new faces show up. A real slow-burner, and definitely a sound Aussie comedy.

### VERDICT:

Classic retro British sci-fi. *Doctor Who* devotees will lap it up.

8



## KOJAK - SEASON ONE (TBC)

DIRECTORS: VARIOUS

CAST: TELLY SAVALAS, HARVEY KEITEL, HECTOR ELIZONDO, JAMES WOODS

AVAILABLE ON: DVD

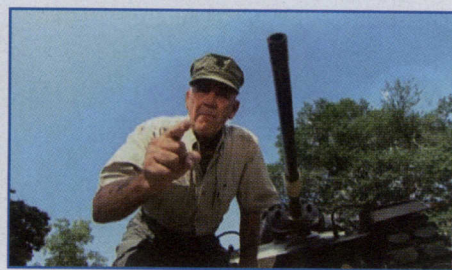
Telly Savalas is Lieutenant Theo Kojak, television's greatest detective (as the DVD tells us) and quite possibly the baldest man we've ever seen. We basically only remember Telly Savalas as the crazy rapist in *The Dirty Dozen* who almost managed to screw up the whole mission. We never saw *Kojak* until now.

The series is set in the New York City Police Department's Thirteenth Precinct, and revolves around the efforts of the incorruptible Lt. Theo Kojak (Savalas) to wipe the city clean of scumbags. From what we gathered he eats a lot of lollipops and is super-fond of the catchphrase, "Who loves ya, baby?" All 23 season one episodes are available here for the first time ever.

### VERDICT:

Kojak was just before our time really, but everybody loves Telly Savalas.

6



## LOCK N' LOAD WITH R. LEE ERMEY - THE COMPLETE SEASON 1 (PG)

DIRECTORS: VARIOUS

CAST: R. LEE ERMEY, LOTS OF GUNS

AVAILABLE ON: DVD

You should remember R. Lee Ermey as the foul-mouthed, borderline mental drill instructor in *Full Metal Jacket*. *Lock N' Load with R. Lee Ermey* puts real guns in his hands.

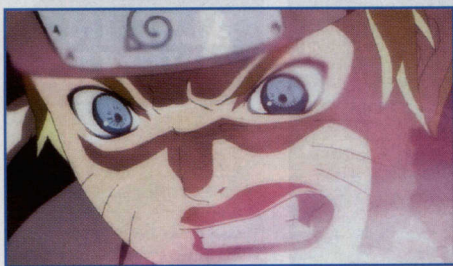
A series highlighting the development of military weaponry throughout the centuries, in each episode Ermey focuses on one specific type of weapon or weapon system, presenting key advancements in its technology and demonstrating their use with the help of experts. He shoots a lot of watermelons.

### VERDICT:

Entertaining and interesting, although you probably won't need more than one watch.

7





## NARUTO SHIPPUDEN THE MOVIE

(TBC)

**DIRECTOR:** HAJIME KAMEGAKI

**CAST:** AYUMI FUJIMURA, CHIE NAKAMURA, JUNKO TAKEUCHI

**AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

This is the fourth *Naruto* movie, and the first to star the rambunctious ninja since a growth spurt put him in an adult-sized orange jumpsuit. With an army of terracotta soldiers threatening to destroy the world, our hero is given the important mission of guarding a snooty teen priestess, the only person with the power to defeat the demon overlord responsible for these shenanigans.

Will exposure to Naruto's irrepressible pigheadedness help cure her ennui? Can Rock Lee, Sakura, and Neji defeat the freaky 'medical ninjas' out to crush them? Do you only really need to see this movie once?

There's a different answer to all those questions. Watch it and find out for yourself.

### VERDICT:

Not likely to be the best springboard for new fans, but that's not who it's made for.

6



## BLEACH VOLUME 21

(PG)

**DIRECTOR:** NORIYUKI ABE

**CAST:** FUMIKO ORIKASA, MASAKAZU MORITA

**AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

It's a testament to the popularity of this ongoing shonen series that it's still being packaged in four-episode single-disc editions, when most other shows are now sold in 13-episode jumbo packs. Volume 21 continues the 'Bount' filler arc, with Ichigo and the Soul Reapers locked in deadly combat with a seemingly unstoppable race of golem-summoning vampires.

While the pacing and sense of humour remain consistent, the series is beginning to suffer from these lengthy non-canonical side-plots. This disc sees more action from Izuru and his devastating penitence blade, plus the return of Lieutenant Matsumoto and her gargantuan breasts.

Seriously, they're massive.

### VERDICT:

If you already own the last 20 volumes you'll have bought this already.

5



## BAMBOO BLADE COLLECTION 1

(PG)

**DIRECTOR:** HISASHI SAITO

**CAST:** HOUKO KUWASHIMA, KATSUYUKI KONISHI, MEGUMI TOYOGUCHI

**AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

This is a variant on your classic 'harem anime' scenario; two PE teachers at rival schools hope to vicariously resolve their simmering conflict through the sparring of their elite all-girl sword-fighting teams. Easier said than done, for these dueling gaggles of one-dimensional characters are profoundly dysfunctional.

The main character is Tamaki Kawazoe; she's shy, retiring, and a ruthlessly efficient sportswoman, in spite of her limited age and height — a 'moe blob' in the tradition of Rei Ayanami and Yuki Nagato. The strong points of this series include light comedy, and a surprisingly thorough introduction into the world of Kendo.

### VERDICT:

Elite all-girl sword-fighting teams. Do we need to say that again?

7



IF YOU  
LIKE THIS  
TRY...

### Shaman King

Many fans recommend this as similar.

**DIRECTOR:** TAKUYA IGARASHI | **CAST:** CHIAKI OMIGAWA, KOUKI UCHIYAMA | **AVAILABLE ON:** DVD

## SOUL EATER COLLECTION 1

(M)

This is one of those rare shows that reminds you why you got into anime in the first place. *Soul Eater* is a merry jumble of sight gags, titillation, and energetic, well choreographed fight scenes. It's a show that reinvents the clichés of the medium, yet has no pretensions of being anything beyond pure, unadulterated entertainment.

Soul Eater is the main character's name, as well as his job description. He patrols a warped fairy tale world

gobbling up the corrupt souls of villains and demons — but first he must slay them. To this end he transforms into an edgy-looking scythe, so he can be twirled around by Maka, a girl whose dedication to righteousness is matched only by the shortness of her skirt. Other high-school aged heroes include a shameless parody of *Naruto* named Black Star, and Death the Kid, the obsessive/compulsive son of the Grim Reaper.

They've done a surprisingly good job on the English-language dub, capturing the subtle emotional range of the original Japanese cast. This is all too often not the case.

Heartily recommended.

### VERDICT:

Above all this series is refreshing: a sucker punch with candy enamel coating. Watch it, and you'll feel like a kid again.

9



# INTERMISSION

AT THE CINEMA

## BENEATH HILL 60 (TBA)

**DIRECTOR:** JEREMY SIMS | **CAST:** BRENDAN COWELL, GYTON GRANTLEY, BOB FRANKLIN | **IN CINEMAS:** APRIL 15

In the first World War, a group of Australian miners were sent to the Western Front in order to tunnel underneath the fighting going on above ground so that they could destroy key structures and tactical strongholds that were unapproachable on the surface. In these dank, squalid environments the miners had to continue tunnelling, as well as listen for the German forces that were doing the same thing.

Based on the true story of one of the miners, Oliver Woodward (Cowell) and his platoon of ordinary blokes, *Beneath Hill 60* is a

remarkable Australian film. Woodward's flashbacks to his home in Broken Hill tell us more than just why he signed up to live in this hell hole, while the conflict on the front line is gritty and very believable.

Despite some clunky dialogue at the start, *Beneath Hill 60* quickly turns into a tense drama-cum-action film. Comparable to *Saving Private Ryan* for its story of mateship, sacrifice and detailing the conditions of war, despite the difference in setting and time period, this is a film to admire.

## THE BUZZ

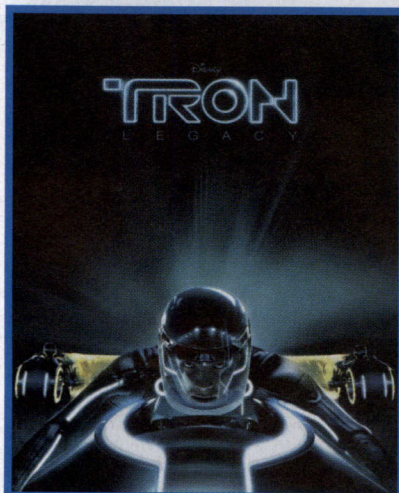
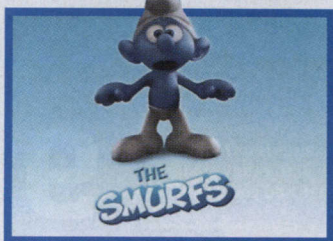
What's really going on behind the scenes

We're thinking of a movie that stars blue CGI characters and also live-action actors. If you said *Avatar*, sorry, try again. If you said *The Smurfs*, stop reading our minds, it's freeing us out.

Directed by Raja Gosnell, also responsible for *Home Alone 3* and the *Scooby-Doo* movies, *The Smurfs* – a story of tiny blue people-like creatures

living underground in a pseudo-communist society – is set in New York's Central Park and has more acting cred to it than you'd probably expect. *How I Met Your Mother*'s Neil Patrick Harris voices one of the smurfs, while Hank Azaria will play the antagonist Gargamel. The venerable Papa Smurf will be brought to life by American comedy legend Jonathan Winters, who also gave his voice to the iconic children's cartoon.

As we've pointed out before, there's a trend for '80s movies being revived – *The Karate Kid* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* last issue, and the sequel to *Tron* is also due this year which, even if the script's terrible, will make millions. Curiously, it's another film with lots of blue and CGI: a potential combination for success or circumstance? We'll find out in December this year.



## ALSO IN CINEMAS

### SHE'S OUT OF MY LEAGUE (MA15+)

**DIRECTOR:** JIM FIELD SMITH

**CAST:** JAY BARUCHEL, ALICE EVE, T.J. MILLER

Kirk (Jay Baruchel, *Knocked Up*, *Tropic Thunder*), an average Joe, can't believe his luck. Though he's stuck in a seemingly dead-end job as an airport security agent, against all odds, Molly (Alice Eve), a successful and outrageously gorgeous babe, falls for him. Kirk is stunned, but now he has to figure out how to make the relationship work.

### IRON MAN 2 (TBA)

**DIRECTOR:** JOHN FAVREAU

**CAST:** ROBERT DOWNEY, JR., MICKEY ROURKE, DON CHEADLE, GWENETH PALTROW, SCARLETT JOHANSSON, SAM ROCKWELL, SAMUEL L. JACKSON

The world is aware that billionaire inventor Tony Stark is the armored superhero Iron Man. Under pressure from the government, the press, and the public to share his technology with the military, Tony is unwilling to divulge the secrets behind the Iron Man armor because he fears the information will slip into the wrong hands. Tony forges new alliances and confronts powerful new forces.

### HOT TUB TIME MACHINE (TBA)

**DIRECTOR:** JOHN FAVREAU

**CAST:** JOHN CUSACK, ROB CORDDRY, CRAIG ROBINSON, CLARK DUKE, LIZZY CAPLAN, CRISPIN GLOVER, SEBASTIAN STAN, CHARLIE MCDERMOTT, CHEVY CHASE

A group of best friends have become bored with their adult lives. After an insane night of drinking in a ski resort hot tub, the men wake up, heads' pounding, in the year 1986. This is their chance to alter the past and change their futures for the better.



# SHIVS NOT INCLUDED



Face it: the best part of the *Prison Break* TV show was when the two brothers were trying to get out of prison. It was also a cracking mystery, filled with double-crossing, subterfuge and the brutality of prison. The game aims to continue the trend.

Turning the point of perspective you play as a new character, Tom Paxton, an agent of the mysterious organisation known as 'The Company'. Paxton's on the same bus into the Fox River Penitentiary as Michael Scofield, a skilled engineer who's just been convicted for armed robbery. Your mission is to find out more about Scofield and his brother Lincoln Burrows – who happens to be in the same prison. Coincidence? Hardly.

Plus, just who are The Company? This third-person action adventure utilises the visual likeness and voices of the main cast to immerse you in the environment. As well as using your cunning to sneak around and hide from the guards and security cameras, you'll have to prepare yourself for underground fights, earning money and – most importantly – respect from your fellow inmates so you can finish your investigation. Just be sure to dodge the flaming loo rolls and surly guards.

OUT NOW.

# PRISONBREAK

THE CONSPIRACY

Distributed By:



Interactive Entertainment Specialists

[www.qvsoftware.com.au](http://www.qvsoftware.com.au)



## THE BEST PSN GAMES

Buy and play in your home!

**BRAID**  
DEVELOPER: Hothead  
PLAYERS: 1

A charming platformer that incorporates one of last decade's most used mechanics – time manipulation – whilst wrapped up in gorgeous graphics. Incredibly addictive and charming as hell, it's made even better when you discover it was all made by one man. Buy it.



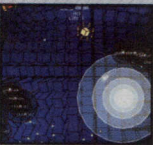
**WIPEOUT HD**  
DEVELOPER: SCE  
PLAYERS: 1-8

Yes, it's a HD remix of tracks from the PSP versions, but *HD* is too sublime to ignore. Utterly gorgeous, running at a blistering framerate and handles superbly. Mandatory. We may not a fully-fledged, dedicated PS3 version of the series for now, but this will do fine.



**EVERYDAY SHOOTER**  
DEVELOPER: Queasy Games  
PLAYERS: 1

Don't be fooled by the sparse art style. This cunningly blends music in with the action that turns it from a dual-stick shooting whimsy into a highly addictive blaster. It's very easy to lose hours and hours to this game as you strive to make it through the tough stages.



**FLOWER**  
DEVELOPER: thatgamecompany  
PLAYERS: 1

High concept and totally pretty, it plays like a dream. Guide petals on the wind using the motion-sensing of your DualShock 3. You will be amazed. More than one OPS staffer has lost sleep trapped in this game.



**MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2**  
DEVELOPER: Capcom  
PLAYERS: 1-2

It's by no means 'straight' *Street Fighter*, and nor should it. Stuffed with 56 characters, this three-on-three brawler is a visual and aural explosion. The HD treatment is superbly done. If you're a fighting nut, you should have this already.



**BIONIC COMMANDO REARMED**  
DEVELOPER: GRIN  
PLAYERS: 1

*Bionic Commando Rearmed* is a prime example of what many love about the PSN: being a platform for updates of classics. It's pure gameplay – and rock hard. We don't know why you'd bother playing the recent remake instead.



## SIMPLY THE BEST...

The best of the best of the best of the *best*

### ADVENTURE



### GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

"*GTAIV* is a game 10 out of 10 was designed for – a game that takes your rising, constantly spiralling expectations and vapourises them with a product so sublime you'll tell your grandkids about it."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar North PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16

10



### UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES



"Easily the best PS3 exclusive to date, *Uncharted 2* combines genre-defining visuals, high adventure and cinematic intensity like nothing before. Don't miss the original either. Get both, this second."

DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog  
PUBLISHER: Sony  
PLAYERS: 1-12

10



### BAYONETTA



"It takes balls to make a game this violent, sexy, and weird. It takes skill to make it so well, and it takes a Japanese mindset to make it so freakishly perverted. Smooth and stylish: the ultimate evolution of *Devil May Cry* style action."

DEVELOPER: Platinum Games  
PUBLISHER: Sega  
PLAYERS: 1

9



### ASSASSIN'S CREED II

"A far more compelling story than the revolutionary original, there's more to see and do, and more ways of dealing death than before. Ubisoft has tweaked the climbing mechanic to make it feel part puzzler, but all action."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft  
Montreal PUBLISHER: Ubisoft  
PLAYERS: 1

9



### MGS4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

"An incredibly layered gaming experience that is almost inexhaustible. One of the best games available on the PlayStation 3, and definitely one of the top exclusives. Buy and play this videogame now. Seriously."

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions  
PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners  
PLAYERS: 1-16

10



### HEAVY RAIN



"Kudos to Quantic Dream for continuing to evolve its unique brand of gameplay and storytelling. Compelling, different, addictive – *Heavy Rain* is all of these things. This game will appeal to gamers and non-gamers alike. We just need people to stop telling us it's a revolution."

DEVELOPER: Quantic Dream  
PUBLISHER: Sony  
PLAYERS: 1

8



### GOD OF WAR III



"Easily eclipses anything out there and reclaims its rightful place at the pinnacle of its genre. Believe the hyperbole. *God of War III* deserves an honoured place – both in your own personal collection and the mighty PlayStation Parthenon"

DEVELOPER: Santa Monica Studios  
PUBLISHER: Sony  
PLAYERS: 1

10



### FALLOUT 3

"Taking the solid base of *Oblivion* and placing it into a post apocalyptic wasteland always sounded like a great idea – and *Fallout 3* proves that concept brilliantly. This is a game that will astound you with the sheer depth and enormity of its incredible vision."

DEVELOPER: Bethesda  
PUBLISHER: Atari  
PLAYERS: 1

9



## SHOOTER



### BORDERLANDS

"Borderlands starts out great and only gets better from there. It takes the best elements of RPGs and shooters and fuses them, and it's simply the most rewarding co-op to date."

DEVELOPER: Gearbox PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-4

9



### KILLZONE 2

"Visually *Killzone 2* runs through the competition like a bull in the proverbial china shop. Lucky then, that the game's design and story matches the lofty production values. *Killzone 2* is the first-person shooter evolved."

DEVELOPER: Guerrilla PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

10



### BIOSHOCK 2

"Plot-wise, this doesn't match the original. However, the combat has been spliced to near-perfection. A more than worthy sequel that should easily suck you back under for another tumble."

DEVELOPER: 2K Marin PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-10

8



### MODERN WARFARE 2

"It's almost like three games in one, stuffed with moments that will leave you shocked and breathless with excitement. Superbly crafted, *MW2* is, with its older brother, a pinnacle of this generation's games."

DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward PUBLISHER: Activision PLAYERS: 1-18

10



### IL-2 STURMOVIK: BIRDS OF PREY

"It's not an FPS, but shooting is all you do – in the skies above Europe. Head-turning attention to detail and intense action. Awesome, actually."

DEVELOPER: Gaijin Entertainment PUBLISHER: AIE PLAYERS: 1-16

9



### ALIENS VS PREDATOR

"Possibly the greatest movie-inspired game ever. This positively oozes atmosphere and is a must for the fans. Wonderfully visualised, incredibly immersive and true to its inspiration."

DEVELOPER: Rebellion PUBLISHER: Sega PLAYERS: 1-4

9



### BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

"In almost every way *Bad Company 2* technically outclasses the original, but that's to be expected. We just miss the mischief. But maybe that's just us. Even still, this is a top-tier shooter that's more than up to the task of standing side-by-side with *MW2*."

DEVELOPER: DICE PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-24

8



### GHOST-BUSTERS

"Well-honed and accessible controls, some spectacular visual effects, excellent pace, great level design, incredible attention to detail – all of these essential traits combined with the *Ghostbusters* universe and come together for a thoroughly addictive experience."

DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-4

9



### MAG

"You will need to put some hours in before you get to unlock the best goodies, and it's the kind of game that requires fairly frequent attention, but the pay off is one of the singularly most compelling and captivating shooters to date."

DEVELOPER: Zipper Interactive PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-256

9

## CRAPPIEST VIDEOGAME TAGLINES



### GOAL STORM 97

*Goal Storm 97* was the PAL version of *Winning Eleven* on PSone. As read from the back cover: "Goal Storm. There's a storm coming... a Goal Storm!" Really? Thanks for the forecast, Cpt. Obvious.



### HOME ALONE

The blatantly obvious keeps on coming, trendsetters. Upon finding a copy of the PS2 title *Home Alone* we were greeted with the following blurb on the back: "Home Alone. You are Home Alone." Seriously, what monkey writes this crap?



### V-RALLY 3

The cover of this PS2 racer came with a big picture of Neal Bates in his car and two taglines. The first: "Endorsed by Neal Bates Motorsports". The second "Car and driver not featured in game." Wait, what?



### FIFA 09

EA Sports takes the cake for the laziest idea for an advertising campaign ever conceived by a primate. "Let's FIFA 09" was the call. Not, "Let's play FIFA 09" or any other such meaningful sentence. Bizarre.



### LASSIE

Here's another amazing game title from Blast! Entertainment, the folks who brought you *Home Alone* on the PS2. Scoop up this festering turd of a title, turn it over and be wowed by descriptiveness: "You're Lassie!"



### THE BEST PSP GAMES

Small system. Big games.

#### LITTLEBIG PLANET

**DEVELOPER:** SCE  
**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLAYERS:** 1



Retaining all of the fun of one the PS3's most entertaining platforms, this version sacrifices little on the transition to the small screen. Incredibly deep, engaging – and fun.

#### MH: FREEDOM UNITE

**DEVELOPER:** Capcom  
**PUBLISHER:** THQ  
**PLAYERS:** 1-4



Monster Hunter is a system seller in native Japan, and it deserves that accolade here. It's an adventure game to lose your life to, and rewards in spades if you're able to put the effort in.

#### WIPEOUT PULSE

**DEVELOPER:** SCE  
**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLAYERS:** 1-8



Its predecessor, *Pure*, laid the groundwork. It's not that this does much that differently, it just does it better. Beautifully animated and weighted just right, it's a futurist's dream come true.

#### GTA: CHINATOWN WARS

**DEVELOPER:** Rockstar Leeds  
**PUBLISHER:** Rockstar  
**PLAYERS:** 1



Hilarious. Violent. Addictive. Yes, it's a port of a DS title, but it's a port done right, and it rebels against the style of other GTA games. A tightly scripted, mature and entertaining package.

#### MGS: PORTABLE OPS

**DEVELOPER:** Kojima Productions  
**PUBLISHER:** Mindscape  
**PLAYERS:** 1



As a chapter in an epic story that's kept PlayStation fans rapt for more than a decade, this is essential. As an adventure game in its own right, it's bliss. A fine action title, no matter what.

#### SOULCALIBUR

**DEVELOPER:** Namco Bandai  
**PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft  
**PLAYERS:** 1-2



Yes, it's even better than *Tekken*. Beautiful to look at and easy to pick up and play, it also has *God of War*'s Kratos as a playable character. Brimming with unlockables, it's a classic.

### RACING



#### PURE

"Pure shot straight from nowhere to rub *MotorStorm*'s face in its glorious graphics and watertight gameplay. It's not as varied as its main competitor, but damn does it play well."

**DEVELOPER:** Black Rock **PUBLISHER:** Madman **PLAYERS:** 1-16

9



#### GRAN TURISMO 5: PROLOGUE

"An anemic game package that somehow survives by being what is quite possibly the greatest example of audio-visual excellence on the PlayStation 3 thus far. Well worth checking out."

**DEVELOPER:** Polyphony Digital  
**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLAYERS:** 1-16

8



#### COLIN MCRAE: DIRT

"Dirt 2 is snazzy, but it's too boneheaded for its own good, has few real rally cars and very little proper rallying. The original *DIRT* remains a far better example of a next gen rally game. More varied and far less US-centric."

**DEVELOPER:** Codemasters  
**PUBLISHER:** Namco Bandai Partners **PLAYERS:** 1-16

9



#### SEGA RALLY

"To appreciate *Sega Rally* you'll have to continually remind yourself that it's a deceptively life-like caricature of a hardcore rallying experience. Not brain surgery, but it delivers the fun in big muddy spades."

**DEVELOPER:** Sega Driving Studio  
**PUBLISHER:** Sega  
**PLAYERS:** 1-6

9



#### RACE DRIVER GRID

"This bastard rock n' roll son of V8 Supercars and Colin McRae: *DIRT* is hot. Your lower jaw will relax. Your eyelids will take five. And you'll start to drool. Shame it ditched its roots though, and the V8 DLC Codies promised has vanished."

**DEVELOPER:** Codemasters  
**PUBLISHER:** Namco Bandai Partners **PLAYERS:** 1-12

9



#### NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT

"*SHIFT* bucks the trend of all-American games, and treats you as an intelligent racer. Whether you want to get under the bonnet and tinker, or even just race with what you're given, this truly is a must-have package. It's also damn pretty and very, very noisy."

**DEVELOPER:** Black Box  
**PUBLISHER:** EA  
**PLAYERS:** 1-8

9



#### MOTORSTORM

"In our humble opinion *MotorStorm* was the best launch title on the fledgling PS3 – and arguably it's one of the greatest launch titles of all time. Defining next-gen racing as a platform upon which smart AI and terrain deformation could thrive, *MotorStorm* reinvented the arcade racer."

**DEVELOPER:** Evolution Studios  
**PUBLISHER:** Sony  
**PLAYERS:** 1-16

10



#### MIDNIGHT CLUB: LOS ANGELES

"Within its niche sub-genre, *MC: LA* reigns supreme. Well designed, rolling objectives, and an insane amount of customisation, *MC: LA* manages to rise above the rabble, easily beating off *Need for Speed Undercover* at its own game."

**DEVELOPER:** Rockstar San Diego  
**PUBLISHER:** Rockstar  
**PLAYERS:** 1-16

7



#### BURNOUT PARADISE

"You'll lament the thoughtless removal of splitscreen and the lack of a retry button, but you'll marvel at the slick frame rate, the sun drenched city, and Criterion's stellar commitment to free downloadable content. Awesome."

**DEVELOPER:** Criterion  
**PUBLISHER:** EA  
**PLAYERS:** 1-16

9



## MUSIC & SPORTS



### ROCK BAND 2

"Rock Band 2 is the best music game around. Import Rock Band and LEGO Rock Band to your hard drive, access the DLC, and you'll have over 1000 songs at your fingertips. You can't fault it."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8

10



### THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND

"From the tunes to screaming hordes of women to psychedelic trips through acid-fuelled imaginations, Harmonix nailed it all. A landmark collaboration."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-4

9

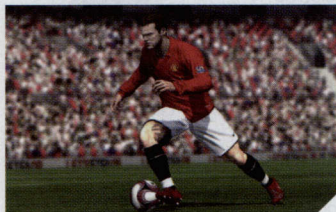


### SKATE 2

"Despite some frame rate issues, SKATE 2 is undoubtedly one of the greatest sports games ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense, the balance is sublime. Massively addictive."

DEVELOPER: EA Black Box PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8

9



### FIFA 10

"With its new momentum physics, stellar visuals, and engaging gameplay, 2009 was the year that the FIFA franchise managed to leap the perennial hurdle that is Pro Evolution Soccer. FIFA 10 is even better. Buy it, become obsessed."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-20

9

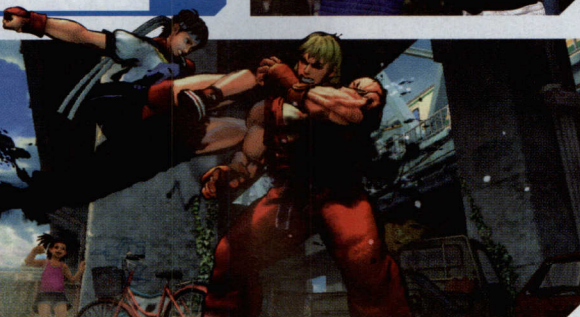


### FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

"A spectacular game. Deeper and more technical, Fight Night Round 4 recreates the sweet science more faithfully than ever before. Remarkable detail, incredible animation."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-2

9



### STREET FIGHTER IV

"Capcom has been in the virtual brawling business longer than anyone, and with its vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay, SFIV is worth paying double for. Acquire on sight."

DEVELOPER: Capcom PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

10



### UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

"It was trumped by Fight Night Round 4, but it's taken the arrival of WWE SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 to remind us just how tight UFC 2009 really is. A technical, rewarding fighter that looks bloody unreal."

DEVELOPER: Yuke's DISTRIBUTOR: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

8



### VIRTUA TENNIS 2009

"More of a tweak than a brand new experience, Virtua Tennis 2009 is still the most enjoyable tennis game available today. Along with player creation tools, the biggest plus is the chance to play in the Davis Cup."

DEVELOPER: Sumo DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA PLAYERS: 1-4

8



### GUITAR HERO METALLICA

"Guitar Hero Metallica improves upon GHWT in a number ways – a more user-friendly HUD, superior presentation and more attention to detail. Great tracklist too, including 'Tuesday's Gone' by Lynyrd Skynyrd."

DEVELOPER: Neversoft DISTRIBUTOR: Activision PLAYERS: 1-4

8



### DJ HERO

"A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick once you've played it. Utterly addictive, and great value when you consider it's chock full of great mixes you'll never hear anywhere else. An excellent game, and great for parties."

DEVELOPER: Freestyle Games DISTRIBUTOR: Activision PLAYERS: 1-2

9

## MAGIC MOMENTS



GAME: Gran Turismo CONSOLE: PlayStation YEAR: 1998

### THE MOMENT:

Back in the days before online leaderboards and your hippy hoppy music, we had to issue our own challenges around the office. For example: "you suck if you can't make Abe the Mudokon fart 40 times in five minutes" might be yelled at a hapless individual. If that person didn't make said feat happen they would, indeed, suck – and continue to suck for the rest of the week.

One of the greatest 'score challenges' we ever had was with the original Gran Turismo. The High Speed Test was our coliseum and Polyphony's polygonal cars were our ugly gladiators.

After many days experimenting with the fastest cars available in the game, we began to narrow the list down to Toyota Supras and Nissan Skylines. The maximum speeds we were achieving with those were sitting just shy of the 420km/h mark. This fierce tuning war continued for many a lunch break with each competitor tweaking their rides to the most miniscule degree in order to squeeze out just one extra kilometres worth of top speed.

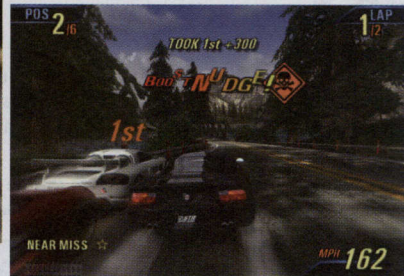
And then somebody decided to play the mother of all wild cards.

Quite by dumb chance (there was no Internet and gameFAQs back then) one of us stumbled across a second-hand version of the Mitsubishi '95 GTO Twin Turbo that, amazingly, proved to be of a slightly superior quality to the 'new' version of the same car. 930bhp later, we coaxed that underdog to blaze through to victory at a whopping 423km/h. The accomplishment itself was great, but not nearly as satisfying as the process of tweaking all the cars and trash talking one another into improving upon the score. That's gaming at its greatest and your magic moment in a nutshell. Crack out your copy of GT and try to beat it. We dare you.





We really do miss purpose-built tracks. Must EVERY racing game be open-world? Why?



# 2004 BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN

This fire is outta control...

'Driving fighting game.' Just take a moment and let the fully sickness of that phrase sink fully into your brain. Criterion Games unleashed *Burnout 3: Takedown* on the world in 2004 and brought about its very own road rage renaissance. It was a breath of fresh air to the both the *Burnout* series and to the racing genre in general. In the eyes of many hardcore *Burnout*-ists, it has yet to be beaten and run off the road.

Notably, this was the first game in the *Burnout* series to feature Takedowns and Crashbreakers which were, essentially, flashy ways to turn exotic rival cars into something closer resembling a Terminator's turd. Whereas *Burnout 2* was strictly about speed and dangerous driving, *Burnout 3* introduced automobile anarchy and sported much higher production values (thanks mainly to Criterion being acquired by EA Games).

This illustrious sequel also served as an early pioneer of the modern risk/reward mechanic. For example; the re-jigged turbo

boost meter filled up if you drove on the wrong side of the road, near-missed civilians and just generally drifted it like you stole it. You were also actively encouraged to trade paint with your race rivals too, with any shunt, rub, grind or slam earning you boost by sapping it out of your victim. If you issued a T-bone Takedown on a rival your boost meter would extend to four times the original size and engorge with firey boost. Conversely, crashing made your meter shrink like a frightened turtle. Freudian? Yeah, a little. Fun? You bet your arse.

Honestly, you could pick up a copy of *Burnout 3* today, play it and have a crap tonne of fun. Methodically winning and unlocking the 67 cars (be it a Compact, Muscle, Sports, Race or Heavyweight) is just as addictive as it ever was. But the real cherries on the cake are still the nabbing of Signature Takedowns (killing a car in a certain section of the track to earn a 'puntacular' Polaroid) and the glorious vengeance that may be found via the Aftertouch mechanic. For those of you unfamiliar with it, Aftertouch allowed you to

slow down time and, if you were good enough, steer your wreck into the person (or persons) responsible for your predicament and to make them die horribly as well. It served as a strategic

table-turn and was chock full of satisfaction.

Ironically, Criterion broke the mold after they made this game and produced something of a car wreck. The follow-up, *Burnout Revenge*, introduced woeful hair-brained ideas of its own; including Crashbreakers during races, and the ability to Traffic Check cars (ramming same-way traffic out of your way). In a nutshell, Criterion overcooked the original idea and the greater dependence upon blind chance was accompanied by a loss of precision racing.

True, *Burnout Paradise* was a step back in the right direction. But if you really want to experience some truly champagne vehicular violence, you really ought to track down *Burnout 3: Takedown* and get sideways with this under-appreciated classic. **Adam Mathew**



Buzzed about the Criterion *Need for Speed* game? We are



## INFO

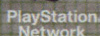
**CONSOLE:** PLAYSTATION 2  
**GENRE:** RACING  
**DEVELOPER:** CRITERION GAMES  
**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:** ENGLAND  
**CURRENT APPROXIMATE PRICE:** \$10

“In the eyes of many... it has **yet to be beaten** and run off the road”

## THE DJ DEGENERATION

*Burnout 3: Takedown* wasn't always the best of times, it was also the blurst in some spots. This third entry into the *Burnout* series introduced one of the most hated voices to assail our ears: DJ Stryker. This masterpiece was very nearly defaced by this real-life L.A. DJ and his irritating prattle. Criterion's soundtracks have always been a little too enthusiastic for emo, nu-metal and such, but we could eventually learn to love such music. Stryker was a different story; homeboy was gut-wrenchingly aggravating.





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IT TAKES TO LEAD?**

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The logo for the magazine 'MAG' is displayed in a large, bold, metallic font. The letters are three-dimensional and have a weathered, industrial appearance. The 'M' and 'A' are connected, and the 'G' is slightly offset. The logo is set against a dark, textured background.

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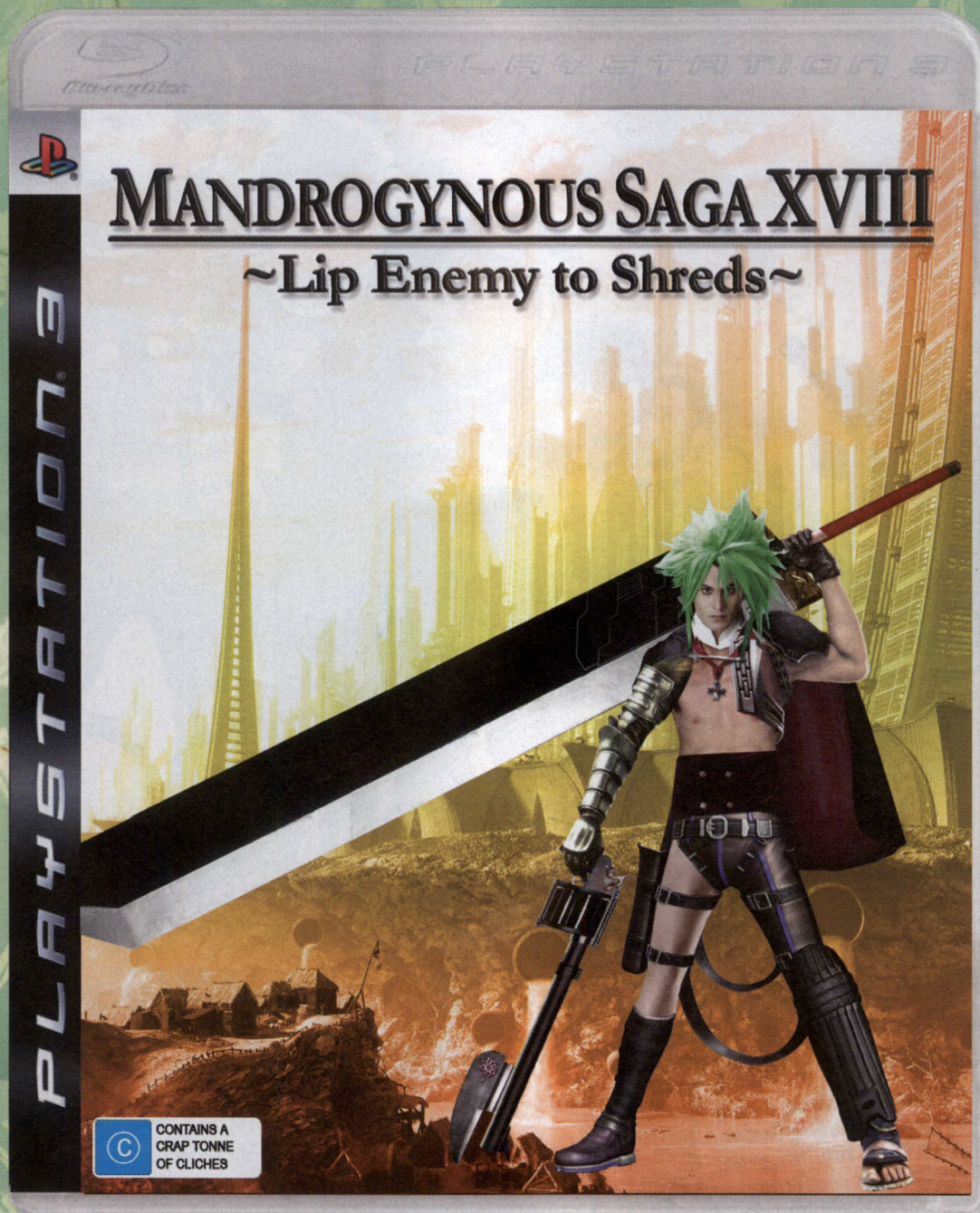
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PlayStation Portable

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# NEXT ISSUE

## COMING NEXT MONTH: REVIEWS

Red Dead Redemption  
UFC Undisputed 2010  
Lost Planet 2  
Split/Second  
God of War Collection  
Blur  
Alpha Protocol  
Dead to Rights: Retribution  
...and more!

## PREVIEWS

Dead Rising 2  
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II  
Transformers: War for Cybertron  
...and more!



# TRUE CRIME

**EXCLUSIVE FIRST-LOOK:** A cops versus crooks action-fest on the neon streets of Hong Kong! All the details on this exciting reboot!

**ON SALE MAY 12**

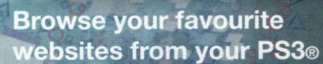
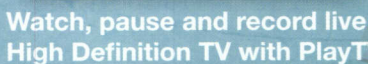
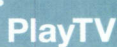
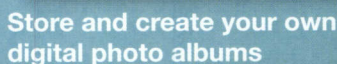
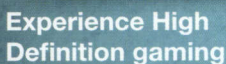
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